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THE PALADIN.¹

AS BEHELD BY A WOMAN OF TEMPERAMENT.

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CHAPTER XVI.

ESTHER JUSTIFIES EXPECTATION.

SHE answered demurely, 'I work in the laboratory.'

He glanced about him. The room was austere furnished, the library of a man scornful of accessories. Books, not conspicuous for fine bindings, lined the walls. The chairs and tables were of mahogany, substantial but not beautiful. Through the open door of the laboratory Harry could see whitewashed walls, a long deal table covered with apparatus, retorts, rows of test-tubes, crucibles, and such chemists' gear.

'I heard you had become a nurse; you always wished to earn your own living.'

'And I have done it.'

A note of triumph displeased him. He perceived that the spirit crushed by outrageous fortune reanimated her again under happier conditions.

'You treated me without much consideration,' he murmured, with a side glance at the door of the consulting-room. Then he added, 'I shall not refer to that again.'

'Thank you.'

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Obviously he wished her to be impressed by his magnanimity and indifference. He had the air of a magnate who could afford to overlook misconduct in a social inferior, and who was aware that his smile to a mere breadwinner meant encouragement, a benediction, and his frown—chastisement. Esther continued, after a moment's hesitation, 'You think I behaved shabbily, but that is because you can't get outside yourself. After all, why should you?'

'What do you mean?' She had always known that his wits worked slowly. Time had not quickened their action.

'You are so big, a person of such importance. How can you stand in my shoes?'

'You are laughing at me!'

'If I could, if I did, ought a lion to grudge such tiny compensation to a mouse? Meeting you again, knowing to what dizzy heights you have climbed, I might well laugh at the irony of things, for I have a sense of humour, my lord.' She dropped him a curtsy. Of course he could not see beneath a pitiful attempt to speak lightly. He pronounced her frivolous, a coquette, and thus condemning her was more sensible of her charm than ever. Because she did not cringe he said, almost rudely, 'When is this doctor coming back?'

At his words fear again assailed her. Why was Harry here? She had seen even bigger and stronger men walk into hospitals and consulting-rooms.

'You are not ill, are you?'

'Would you care tuppence if I was? Ill? I never was so fit.'

'Then why are you here?'

'To meet my wife. I was delayed at the club.'

'Is Lady Camber ill?'

'She is very ill indeed,' he answered. 'For three years we have tried everything and everybody. It has been terrible for her and for me. I have almost lost hope.'

'I'm so sorry, I—I——' She broke off, seeing, so to speak, two and two, but unable to make four of them.

'However, they tell me this Napier is a miracle-worker.'

'Good Heavens!'

'What's the matter?' He spoke more kindly.

'I have just promised to nurse your wife!'

His face hardened again, as he perceived that something other than his personal distress had moved her. He looked at her

steadily, beholding in her a more subtle and alluring beauty. If she nursed his wife he would see her! He had just touched the fringe of this not unpleasant conviction, when he felt her fingers upon his sleeve, and her low, soft voice murmured, 'Of course I shall withdraw.'

'And give this doctor the reason?'

'Certainly. Why not?'

'Because I forbid you to tell a stranger something which intimately concerns me. I don't want outsiders to know that you made a fool of me. And besides——'

'Well?'

'There is another reason; my wife knows nothing of what passed in France.'

'Surely she has heard my name?'

'I don't think so. We were never engaged. People have forgotten. My wife is an intensely jealous woman, and in her present state of health the least thing drives her wild with hysteria. For her sake, for my sake, find some other excuse. Personally, if it is your profession, I see no reason why you shouldn't nurse my wife.'

'Mr. Napier is coming back.'

She had heard the tinkle of a distant bell, and, an instant later, Napier entered the library. He approached Harry, and said quickly, 'Odd thing you should know Miss Yorke. Has she told you that she has promised to nurse Lady Camber?'

'Yes,' said Harry.

Immediately Esther had returned to the laboratory, leaving the two men alone, Napier said with enthusiasm:

'The very best nurse in London, bar none.'

'Indeed.' His air of constraint slightly puzzled Napier, but he supposed that Harry was thinking of his wife. His next words gave colour to this. 'You have formed some opinion already?'

'Oh, yes. Happily, Lady Camber has youth on her side. But she must place herself in my hands for at least six weeks. I cannot permit even you to see her.'

'As you will. Brains and money in combination——'

'And something more, Lord Camber.'

He spoke gravely. Instantly our paladin became sensible that a demand was to be made upon him; as instantly he responded, because we know what an appetite he had for the good opinion of his fellows. Napier impressed him favourably.

'Anything I can do—you have only to speak.'

'Brains and money together do work miracles, but brains and money seem to have failed to restore Lady Camber's health.'

'True, true!' Since he had become a distinguished ornament of the House of Lords, our Harry had cultivated a slightly impressive manner, well suited to a man approaching the prime of life, and beginning to be recognised as a pillar of the State. In the cartoon of him which appeared in 'Mayfair' he is represented in peer's robes and coronet, with the superscription *A Legislator*. One felt that he could and would lay down the law.

'At the end of six weeks I hope that Lady Camber will be strong enough to see you. Everything will depend then on you.'

'On—me?'

He repeated the words to gain time, for Napier's frankness was upsetting. Positively this fellow as good as hinted that till now the husband had not done his part.

'On you,' said Napier. He saw that he stood on thin ice, and skated swiftly over it. 'I may be wrong,' he continued, 'but, to-day, meeting Lady Camber for the first time, I gathered from a certain defiance of voice and manner that life is not very alluring to her.'

'In her wretched state of health how could it be alluring?'

'If I'm any judge of character, I'm sure that Lady Camber is of an affectionate disposition. If that is true, I count on your cordial co-operation.'

'You shall have it,' said Harry heartily, holding out his hand, which Napier grasped with warmth. In the doctor's eyes lay the expression so familiar to our paladin: the recognition of the right thing indicated by the modest word. Harry walked solidly up-right towards the door, paused, and returned. The look upon his handsome face was now not so easy to interpret. To the keen eyes watching him there seemed to be a flicker—one could call it nothing else—of furtiveness.

'If Slufter and those foreigners are right——?'

Napier said nothing.

'If—if she does not recover, tell me the worst; I can bear it. If things do not go right, how long will it be before——'

He broke off with agitation. Napier was thinking, He does love this poor creature! The slightly furtive look had vanished. Unmistakable emotion thrilled Harry's voice. Napier answered slowly:

'Such questions are very difficult to answer, Lord Camber.'

'Man! don't fence with me! I want to know how I stand. Is this terrible grinding uncertainty to go on for ever and ever?'

'The next month will make an enormous difference. If Lady Camber is amenable to my treatment, I can promise her a new lease of life. But,' his voice changed, 'if she is not——'

'Yes?'

'The end must inevitably be soon.'

In silence Harry left the room. Napier touched the bell, and then crossed to the laboratory door. As he opened it and summoned Esther, there was an inflection of triumph in his voice, as if he knew positively that he would succeed where others had failed.

Esther came in wearing a hat, and gloved. The hat was new and became her vastly well. Seeing Napier's glance, she said with a forced smile:

'You like my new hat?'

'Very much.'

'Wise women put their savings into a penny bank; I've put mine into a hat.'

'Spendthrift!' He gave an ambiguous laugh, and continued in a different tone, 'This Camber case interests me enormously. You are not in a hurry, are you? No? Good!' He placed a chair for her, but did not sit himself. Instead he paced slowly up and down, his habit when deeply moved or excited. Esther watched him, with half-averted eyes. He burst out vehemently:

'I must save this woman. Did you ever see her dance?'

'Never!'

'An enchanting creature! So graceful, so pretty—and a capital mimic! At the time of the marriage worldly people sneered at Camber. But I respect him. He married the girl he loved in defiance of public opinion. And then, I take it, he made his first great mistake. He tried to turn her, or she tried to turn herself, into somebody else—a great lady. How absurd! I had a hint from the mother. Lady Camber has cried her life out for the things that her husband could not give her; but she loves him and he loves her.'

'Ah!' said Esther.

'I'm very sorry for Camber. Unless his wife is transformed into what she was, the best thing that could happen for everybody concerned would be——' He completed his sentence with a gesture. Then, triumphantly, he added: 'But we're going to transform her into what she was.'

'Mr. Napier——'

'Yes?'

'I've been thinking that I can't undertake this case.'

He stood still, staring at her, astounded.

'You refuse to help me! Why?'

In her nervousness and confusion she made an idiotic answer,

'I don't feel up to it.'

He repeated the words contemptuously:

'You don't feel *up* to it?'

'I told you I loathed nursing.'

He examined her attentively, frowning, and pulling at his chin.

'You are quite strong again, surely?'

'Thanks to you, yes.'

'And free? No ties?'

'Free for ever and ever.'

Then she laughed, thinking of her freedom, and what it meant. Was freedom always a synonym for slavery? She had emancipated herself in one sense, but she remained and must remain bound to the drudgery of uncongenial tasks, of a life of hard work.

'Why do you laugh, Miss Yorke?'

'Is anybody really free in this world?'

'Have you been unhappy here?'

The kindness of his voice moved her, but she had come to recognise this as a warming wine, always, so to speak, on tap. He spoke kindly to everybody, because he was interested in everybody. With an effort she replied evasively:

'I've enjoyed my luncheons here very much.'

'I'm glad.'

'The food was *so* good!' He appeared disconcerted. She went on at random, 'And I'm so greedy!'

'You say you loathe nursing, but do you loathe the results of such nursing as yours?' She remained silent. He continued incisively, 'Do you think that I enjoy certain parts of my work? But the rewards are ours. I don't speak of money or honours.'

'I know that, Mr. Napier.'

'We have great moments. To see what can be done, and to do it. Ah! That is worth while. And I thought that you——' He broke off, trying to read her. Shamefacedly, she met his eyes, and then, unable to bear their interrogation, lowered her lids. She heard him say, 'You regard me as your friend?'

'I am proud to be your friend, Mr. Napier, if only in a laboratory.'

'A laboratory?'

He reflected that he knew nothing of her outside the laboratory.

'One doesn't expect to find friendship in a laboratory.'

'Even romance may be found in such an unlikely place.'

'Wouldn't iodoform destroy its fragrance? I am rather a hard woman, Mr. Napier. Does that surprise you very much?'

He answered gravely, in striking contrast to the attempted lightness of her tone and manner:

'I'm thirty-eight. Nothing surprises me very much. I regard surprise in a medical man as a sort of twin to ignorance. Hard, are you?'

'I have to consider myself. It is vital to me to keep my health. If this is a case like the duchess's——'

'More difficult.'

'Then I cannot risk another breakdown. I am very sorry.'

Deliberately she averted her eyes.

'I sha'n't let you break down. Come, come; I won't take a refusal. I couldn't have believed that you would desert me, or flinch from a good fight. It will be a good fight, believe me.'

'There are dozens of other nurses.'

'I've told you that this is not a case for an ordinary nurse. It will be your duty to straighten a warped mind.'

She stood up, trembling and irresolute:

'I can't,' she murmured weakly.

He laid his hands upon her shoulders; she could feel the pressure of his fingers upon them, and flowing from them his irresistible will dominating and overwhelming hers. One reason alone, the true one, would be accepted as adequate: all others would be treated as straws to be pushed aside.

'I know you better than you know yourself. You are not going to back out of this. You are *not*, I say.'

His courage began to animate her. If her services were really indispensable——! And if—a more insidious thought—if any effort on her part could wipe out that vast unpaid indebtedness to Harry, ought she to hesitate? Might not this be regarded as a Heaven-sent opportunity? She owed much to Napier, more, infinitely more, to Harry. Each demanded a service at her hands.

'Very well; I will not back out!' she said impetuously.

Her sudden surrender had fascination in it. He was pleased and touched, but he divined a reticence. Surely a woman of

her character and intelligence had a better reason for trying to withdraw than the one she had offered.

'I knew you couldn't and wouldn't. Together we'll pull her through, eh?'

His note was triumphant, that of a conqueror; but she answered with a vague sense of impending disaster, with the more clearly defined conviction that her instincts had been too ruthlessly crushed:

'Perhaps.'

CHAPTER XVII.

MIRANDA WRITES A LETTER.

LEAVING Harley Street, Esther walked to Oxford Circus, and thence down Regent Street. A Londoner born and bred, she adored this huge wonderful city, not for its architecture, not for its squares and parks, but for its unexpectedness, its romance, its intimate charm and colour and ever-varying light and shade. Most of all she loved it when night was closing in, when the myriad lamps flickered out of misty vistas, twinkling like fireflies in an Italian *podere*. Most strivers share this subtle pleasure in 'lighting-up' time. For one reason, it proclaims their release from toil, the end of a dull drab day, spent in ill-ventilated, ill-lit rooms, in the pursuit of a monotonous and exhausting occupation. The light is indeed 'kindly' to all of us who are constrained to live in 'encircling gloom'!

It was late October, and the winter season had begun. Already the smart women were arrayed in furs. Esther never saw a fine set of sables without reflecting with a pang that she had sold hers to keep the hat-shop open a few weeks longer, a wicked waste of time and material. She swung along briskly, pausing now and again to peer into shop windows, for many years a never-failing source of entertainment. It amused her to select the best of everything and, in fancy, to buy it regardless of cost. Thus, having gluttoned, so to speak, imagination, she would, with a humorous realisation of facts as they were, spend a few pence or shillings upon the humblest wares. As a rule, she shunned these gorgeous thoroughfares, because they aroused emotional regrets which she condemned. In a sane and philosophical mood, she would return home by Charing Cross Road, for example; the shorter route, indeed, and one commended by Miranda Jagg, with whom she lived.

She bought a bunch of chrysanthemums in Piccadilly Circus,

and, passing one of the famous theatres, noticed that Laura Jagg was advertised in letters of fire as about to appear in a new play.

Laura Jagg!

The mere mention of the famous actress's name aroused murderous thoughts. Laura earned fifty guineas a week at least, but Miranda, failing in health and fortune, never received a sixpence out of this princely salary. And yet, in a sense, Laura owed her first start in life to the elder sister. The Iron Duke, we have been given to understand, was under similar obligations to the head of his family, but on the morning of his brother's death, he is reported to have said, 'Lord Wellesley is dead. An agreeable man, when he had his own way!'

Esther might have offered to Napier one reasonable excuse for refusing to nurse Lady Camber. At night she was often called upon to minister to her old friend. She was aware also that Miranda's illness four months before had been the real cause of her own breakdown. Napier never guessed that his pet nurse, in defiance of Mrs. Tower's ironclad rules, was devoting her mind and body to *two* patients. Nor did Miranda suspect at the time what inordinate demands the Duchess of Belbury had imposed upon a too-willing attendant.

Esther ascended the steep stairs leading to the saloon. The typewriting machines were ticking furiously as of yore, proclaiming—so it always seemed to Esther—the grim gospel of unremitting work for the millions of which she was an insignificant unit; and, as she reached the first floor, one of the young ladies came out, carrying a sheaf of script in her hand. She had worked here for nearly five years. Esther could remember her as a pretty girl, with round, soft, rosy cheeks. Now she was thin and pale, with an indelible wrinkle between her eyes, and hollows where the dimples had been. Esther wondered if she herself had aged as rapidly. Had Harry noticed an enormous change? She would like to know.

Miranda lay upon the sofa. She had four pupils, but each day her efforts to teach them seemed to leave her exhausted. Nevertheless her indomitable pluck was even more remarkable than before.

Esther presented the chrysanthemums; Miranda's eyes sparkled.

'Something has happened.'

'Yes,' said Esther.

She knew that Miranda would squeeze the last drop of information out of her, and that it would be fatuous to procrastinate, or to try to hide the truth.

'I have met Lord Camber.'

She took off the new hat, eyed it with comparative indifference, and placed it on the table.

'How dramatic!'

'For a moment, yes. I was terrified, but I pulled myself together. Certainly I am stronger than I used to be.'

'I should hope so. Go on!'

'I found myself talking to him with really remarkable composure. His wife is very ill. I have promised to nurse her.'

'You have promised to nurse Alice Godolphin! You are an extraordinary young woman.'

'No longer young.'

'How did your Harry look?'

Esther poured herself out a cup of tea, frowning.

'I wish you wouldn't speak of him as mine; it's so absurd.'

'I can't believe he ever belonged to Alice Godolphin. Has he altered much?'

Both women had followed our paladin's career since his marriage and accession to the throne of his fathers, but they only knew what the British public knew, that he had justified expectation. What his world demanded of him he had done. He was Lord-Lieutenant of his county, and approved everywhere as a model landlord, sportsman, Christian, and gentleman!

'He wears a coat of more serious cut!'

'Did you promise to nurse his wife to oblige him?'

'No—to oblige Mr. Napier.'

'Ah—ha! We are beginning to like Mr. Napier.'

'He forced my hand. I simply couldn't refuse.' She described what had passed, presenting her story, as Miranda liked it, dramatically. Miranda listened, shaking her head and emitting grunts of incredulity. At the end Esther said:

'It's a great opportunity to pay off part of my debt to Harry.'

'How do you propose to do it?'

'I shall nurse his wife as woman was never nursed before.'

'Um!'

'Miranda, you look horribly wicked. What are you thinking?'

'I'm thinking that if you really wish to pay the bill in full, you'd better pop one of these poisons you've been tinkering with into your patient's milk.'

'Miranda!'

'I thought you'd be shocked. What an innocent you are still ! Do you really believe that this man wants that wretched creature to live ?'

'What an abominable question !'

'He married her out of pique, because he couldn't get you. He couldn't have done a stupider thing. These Musical-Comedy girls are not ladies, and we know they're not actresses. They can't even pretend to be ladies. I'm very sorry for your Harry, always was. That he is a bit of a fool is no disability. You would have looked after him nicely. And the cards have always said that you and he would come together. First and last he wanted to marry you.'

'Last rather than first,' murmured Esther.

'If Alice Godolphin is in a rapid decline——'

'I've not seen her yet.'

'The cleverest men in France and Germany have given her up, you say ?'

'But Mr. Napier hasn't.'

'He couldn't save Sabrina. When our time comes we must go. I've never forgiven Alice Godolphin—never !'

'Miranda, dear, please !'

Miranda laughed harshly. At rare moments such as these her coarseness distressed Esther. Always Miranda exploited thoughts which delicately-minded women hardly dare to entertain secretly. Esther had the feeling that if the issues of life and death lay with her old friend she would turn down her thumbs without an instant's hesitation. Had not Sabrina said that Miranda was a Pagan ?

'Is this nursing to be day-work or night ?'

'Day, of course ! You don't think——'

'Go on. You won't ? Very well. I am not to think that you would leave me. Why shouldn't you leave me ? I'm strong again.'

Esther did not answer. She poured out a second cup of tea, with an obstinate look upon her face ; then she said tartly :

'Your sister is going to play at the Deucalion.'

'Is she ?' Miranda looked ten years younger. 'I suppose the other woman is ill. What a bit of luck ! Laura will have an immense success in that part. This is great news—glorious news !'

The utter absence of any jealousy, this unfeigned delight in

the continued good fortune of a sister who had behaved with the blackest ingratitude, stirred Esther to the depths. Loyalty, fidelity, sincerity—what soul-satisfying qualities these were !

She heard Miranda glorifying the talent of her sister Laura, but Esther was thinking of Harry : once her lover, then her friend and benefactor, her saviour, not to put a fine point on it, and now—what ? She saw him, monumentally impressive, as he had turned to meet Napier. She knew that this attitude had become natural to him. What price had he paid to acquire it ? It was awful to reflect that he might have sought this and little else for four years—the perfection of an attitude !

And his wife ?

A mordant curiosity possessed her to see the woman whose place she might have filled, the woman whom more than once she had envied. Yes, envied ! The first year at the nursing home had been very strenuous. There had been moments, dismal moments, when she told herself passionately that she had been a fool. But there had been other moments too—the great moments to which Napier had alluded—when she knew that she had been wise, and that the struggle against wind and tide was developing and strengthening her into an entity whom Sabrina would not be ashamed to greet upon the farther shore. For Esther had been living a life which constrained her to think much and often of that farther shore for which she had seen many, old and young, set sail. It would be unwise to affirm that nurses are especially religious. To many they may appear, apart from the practice of their profession, amazingly light-hearted, and even frivolous. Why not ? Some reaction is inevitable and natural. But when they are watching and waiting for the end, counting the last breaths, marking the supreme change, can we doubt that then they are drawn into a more intimate communion with what is Eternal and Omnipotent ? From the hour when Esther had been forced to live for others, her sympathies had widened, and her knowledge of what life is had become in itself vital, because she had gazed so often upon death.

Of what nature would be this new relation between herself and Harry and Harry's wife ? She knew now, without a scintilla of doubt, that she had never loved the paladin ; and, naturally, he must have lost long ago any love he might have had for her. Because of that she would be able to nurse his wife. Otherwise the situation would have been impossible. Nevertheless, the

liabilities frightened her, the more so because they were vague and amorphous.

'You are not listening to a word I'm saying!' declared Miranda.

'I am not,' Esther confessed, smiling. 'When you rave about your sister Laura I am frankly bored.'

'Then we will talk about you and your affairs. If you are going to nurse a fractious, hard-to-please patient, I protest violently against your sleeping here. These are my rooms, and I give you notice to quit.'

As she spoke, as if to demonstrate the notable improvement in her condition, she attempted to rise from the sofa. Immediately Esther sprang to her assistance, but was waved magnificently aside.

'There!' exclaimed Miranda, standing up.

Esther turned a soft glance upon her friend's stout, ungainly figure, now racked by rheumatic pains. Often, as she was aware, Miranda had to lie still wherever she might be because she couldn't get up.

'What do you suppose I do when you ain't here, eh?'

Esther answered coolly: 'I happen to know what you do. You hammer on the floor with your stick, and one of the girls downstairs comes up.'

'Pish!' said Miranda, walking unsteadily across the saloon.

'You are not fit to be left alone at night,' continued Esther, speaking with professional curtness and finality, 'so let us have no more nonsense. I am going upstairs. You had better lie down again.'

'I must write a letter first.'

Esther discerned a twinkle as Miranda sat down heavily upon the chair by her desk. She laughed, crossed the room, kissed Miranda, and said:

'You are an old duck, but you do fib horribly.'

Miranda's eyes twinkled again as Esther left the room to set about preparations for their simple supper. Then, almost furtively, she wrote as follows:

DEAR SIR,—I conceive it my duty to inform you that I was the very unwilling cause of Miss Yorke's breakdown after nursing the Duchess of Belbury. At the time I was suffering with a severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism, from which I am happy to say I have recovered. I am now perfectly able to look after myself by night or day. You will do me a favour and Miss Yorke a real service if you will insist upon her sleeping in your house, where she will get

proper food and attention. Here she insists upon playing the parts of house-maid, parlour-maid, and cook.

Faithfully yours,

MIRANDA JAGG.

P.S.—You can show this letter to Miss Yorke if necessary.

Having sealed this letter and stamped it, she directed it to Napier, and then tapped on the floor with the famous clouded cane which had been used by Charles James when he played Sir Peter Teazle. One of the typewriting young ladies answered the tap, slightly out of breath, for she had run upstairs.

‘I want you to post this yourself, my dear. And, look here, you begin early and work late. Where do you live?’

‘Happy Hampstead, Miss Jagg.’

‘Indeed. A far cry from Covent Garden. And the nights close in early. Would it be a convenience to sleep here for, say, a couple of months?’

The young lady jumped at such a chance. Within five minutes arrangements satisfactory to each party had been made. The young lady whisked off, and Miranda sat down to play Patience, with a view to discover the intentions of Fate in regard to the nursing of Lady Camber by Esther Yorke. The Patience ‘came out’ satisfactorily from a pagan point of view. Miranda smiled grimly, sensible that if she could see Esther in the robes of a peeress she could turn her face to the wall and expire without vain repinings.

‘The dear child would look beautiful in a tiara,’ she murmured as she reshuffled the cards.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OUR PALADIN FLIRTS WITH OPPORTUNITY.

NAPIER received Miranda’s letter early next morning. It coloured a new Esther, whose better acquaintance he felt an absurd impatience to make. Absurd because, after all, what was Hecuba to him? A clever, light-fingered assistant; a nurse with a gift for dealing tactfully with petulant, disagreeable patients. Was she anything more? It surprised him that he should be obliged to ask such a question. It annoyed him that he was unable to answer it offhand, with an emphatic and contemptuous ‘Nothing!’ Admittedly she was ‘Something,’ an organism to be studied, or

rather an organism that might repay study, and which might—the possibility was barely glimpsed—baffle study. Thinking of her while shaving, he cut his chin, whereat he was unduly exasperated.

Punctually at ten Esther arrived, and, with a curt nod of greeting, took up the work of the previous day. Napier, at the other end of the laboratory, watched her out of curious eyes, trying to perceive the halo which she had been at pains to hide from him. Why did she lay such stress upon the material side of life? Why did she prattle about pretty things? She was pretty herself. No, not pretty: a detestable adjective that! She had been pretty. Now she exhibited charm, distinction, a matured beauty of expression, which he had never remarked before. He wondered whether many men had fallen in love with this attractive creature. And, if so, why, in the Sphinx's name, had she not consented to make one of them happy?

'About this case of ours,' he began abruptly.

'Yes?'

She stood to attention, quietly impassive.

'I've been thinking that you must sleep here.'

'Sorry, but I can't.'

'Have others a claim upon your time?' He saw that his quickness had startled her, but he went on smoothly: 'Is it quite fair to our patient?'

'Did I leave anything undone for the duchess?'

'You left yourself undone. You insisted upon sleeping at home. I ought to have forbidden it flatly. This time I *must* be obeyed.'

She confronted him valiantly, struck, not for the first time, by the look of power upon his face, its ascetic quality, its lean mobility of line. Then she said, smiling.

'It's quite impossible, Mr. Napier.'

Her obstinacy impressed a man accustomed to have his own way with nurses and under-strappers. In silence he handed to her Miranda's letter.

'You see I know all about it.' When she had read the letter and was still staring at it, realising that she had been outwitted, he said slyly: 'So you are an altruist behind the scenes, although you play the pleasure-seeker before me.'

She made no answer.

'The two rôles are not incompatible. In seeking happiness for others you may have found it for yourself.'

'Unfortunately—I haven't. Well, I am cornered, and I suppose I must obey.'

'Of course.'

'Miss Jagg hates strangers,' said Esther, with seeming irrelevance.

'Miss Jagg must have other friends. I'm not going to scold you, but you make a mistake in thinking yourself indispensable to her.'

'Nobody is indispensable.'

'That is going too far. You are indispensable in this particular case, and I shall see to it that you have the food you like, and a pretty room, and a larger fee.'

'You are very kind.'

'It's not altogether a matter of business.'

His tone rather than the words challenged her attention. Napier said slowly: 'You are capable of great things; because of that you deserve small things. Off duty, I hope you will try to look upon me as your host and my house as your home.'

Not waiting for an answer, he turned his back and went out of the laboratory.

Two days later Alice was installed upon the spacious first floor, and the rest-cure began its tedious course. Alice lay in bed, absorbing immense quantities of milk. Twice a day she was massaged. She saw nobody but Napier, Esther, the night-nurse, and the masseuse. She was not allowed to read or write or to receive letters.

From the first moment of meeting Esther exercised a curious dominion over her, the greater because absolutely unsuspected by Alice herself. One of her first remarks had been:

'So you are a lady!'

'Who isn't nowadays?'

'I'm not,' replied Alice sharply. 'That's the trouble. That's what made skin and bone of me. I mean to talk to you as I talk to my maid Peach, who used to be my dresser in the good old days. We're both common. I used to pretend that I was too sweet for anything, but I couldn't keep it up, particularly with my husband's relations. If you have met Lady Matilda Rye you can guess what I've had to put up with since I married.'

'I have met Lady Matilda.'

'Have you? Then you know that she's a cat, although she

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keeps her claws out of sight. She hates me, and she thinks I don't know it!' Alice began to tremble with a sort of suppressed rage, which showed only too plainly how weak she was. Esther, obliged to take a definite line, did not attempt to treat her like a child.

'I am glad you are going to be quite frank with me,' she said quietly. 'But you know, of course, that I'm under ironclad instructions. We can talk together, in moderation at first, upon the one condition that you don't get excited.'

'Did the duchess get excited?'

'At first, it seemed hopeless even to try to soothe her. But she hadn't your brains.'

'How do you know I've brains?'

'If you had been a doll you would have been satisfied with dressing-up and playing the great lady. You have been miserable because, being an artist, you were cast for the wrong part.'

'I believe we shall get on,' said Alice. 'Crikey! I'm lucky in getting you for a nurse.'

Esther had achieved a small triumph, but she wondered whether Lady Camber's affection and confidence might not become oppressive. Obviously of an expansive nature, she would insist, perhaps, on talking about Harry. Avowedly not a lady, she might say—anything. Next day the paladin rose largely above the horizon, appearing at ten in the morning, not with the milk, but with a charming nosegay of violets. In oblations of this sort he was never found wanting.

Alice knew that Esther and Harry were not strangers. The ex-secretary of legation had mentioned discreetly and indifferently that, by rather an odd coincidence, Napier's pet nurse happened to be an old acquaintance. Alice listened with a yawn. Not till she met Esther in the flesh did she evince the slightest interest in her.

'Do you know Lord Camber well?' she had asked.

'Fairly well.'

'How long have you known him?'

'Let me think. I saw him play cricket against Harrow.'

'Are you as old as that? You don't look old.'

'I feel old,' said Esther.

'He is very handsome, don't you think so?'

'Very.'

'I fell in love with him the first day I saw him—head over

heels; the worst case! People are either angels or devils with me. I like you most awfully. I've had nurses before, but I hated 'em. They were all on the make! They didn't care a hang for me. But you're different. You are really interested in me.'

'It's true; I am interested enormously. Mr. Napier is interested too. We want to give you back a new body, a new mind, a new point of view.'

Esther spoke with enthusiasm, but Alice's face indicated disappointment.

'Is your interest only professional?' she asked.

'Certainly not. It is time for the milk.'

'Ugh! How I hate milk!'

'Please.'

The nurse insisted, holding out the nauseating draught, never to be poured out of window, always to be drained to the last drop. 'And now you must try to sleep.'

The first and most difficult week passed more quickly and smoothly than either Esther or Napier had dared to expect. Alice, however, was so feeble in body that any sustained resistance to two strong wills became almost a physical impossibility.

'She will make it lively later,' said Napier. 'Her ladyship's manners are not unimpeachable, are they?'

'She is not as rude, or as ungrateful, or as stupid as the poor duchess.'

'She has taken a fancy to you. Use that as a lever. By the way, the husband rather bores me. Would you mind seeing him when he calls? He suggested it.'

'Oh!' said Esther, with a tiny gasp.

'Have I asked anything extraordinary?'

'Of course not.'

'I fancied you gasped.'

'Perhaps I did. You took me by surprise. I can see Lord Camber for a minute or two, if you particularly wish it, but——'

'Well?'

'The suggestion ought to come from Lady Camber.'

As she spoke a tinge of colour flowed into her cheek, not unobserved by Napier. For the second time he was conscious of fog between Esther and himself.

'If you happen to be out when Lord Camber calls, and if he should ask for me—why, then——'

'I see. Women, I suppose, like to spin webs.'

He spoke scornfully, and she felt an absurd desire to justify herself; to make him, the clever man, the specialist, realise his ignorance in regard to certain phases of the feminine mind.

'Mr. Napier, can you tell me in one word what has brought poor Lady Camber so very low?'

'One word? Um! No—it would take a dozen.'

'The question can be answered with one word of three syllables.'

'Impossible.'

'Jealousy.'

The word soaked in. Esther smiled. Instantly Napier was piqued into replying: 'From my slight knowledge of Lord Camber, and from all I can learn, he has not given his wife cause for jealousy.'

'Did I say that he had? Lord Camber is incapable of behaving with impropriety,' she continued, sensible that her statement had been too authoritative, too obviously the judgment of a woman who must have known Camber intimately: 'As you say, my patient has taken a fancy to me. She talks with embarrassing candour and without pretence. She astounded me by admitting that she was not a lady, and astounded me still more by adding that this was the tap-root of the trouble. Poor creature! She has been morbidly jealous of every lady she has met, of every woman better educated and better bred than herself.'

'Go on,' said Napier. 'This is interesting and instructive.' He spoke seriously, with his keen, penetrating eyes upon Esther's face. Her duty for the day was over, and the night-nurse had taken her place. At this hour of the evening Esther furnished a report and submitted a chart. Then she would change her gown and dine, and afterwards pay a visit to Miranda, or perhaps slip round to the nursing room, hard by, where she was always sure of a welcome.

'She is easier in her mind now, because such comparisons are impossible. Lord Camber sends nose-gays. She knows that he is thinking kindly of her.'

'I beg your pardon,' said Napier. 'You were right and I was wrong. All the same, I cannot be pestered when I'm at work in the laboratory. You wish the suggestion that you should answer Lord Camber's questions to come from his wife?'

'Ye-es.'

'A hesitating affirmative. Well, leave it to me. Are you perfectly comfortable?'

'Perfectly, thank you.'

'If you want anything, name it.'

'Am I coming back into the laboratory when this is over?'

'Of course. I miss you very much. I won't instal anybody in your place.'

'What a handsome compliment! But it reminds me that I ought to return this.'

She was about to take a small key from a thin chain, the key of the laboratory to which no one was allowed access, when he held up his hand, smiling.

'Keep it as a pledge that I mean what I say. And look in to see how things are going whenever you have a mind.'

'Thanks; I will.'

She left the library and returned to her own room. But when she dined with the nurses in attendance upon other cases in the house her usual vivacity seemed to have deserted her. She found her mind dwelling upon Harry, who began to assume the proportions of an advancing Juggernaut. She was sure that he had plotted and planned to secure a meeting with her. Men spun webs, finely reticulated webs, in which women who wished to be left alone were cruelly enmeshed.

Esther, naturally enough, mentioned to Miranda that she was likely to meet the paladin.

'Ha, ha! My lord flirts with opportunity.'

'Why do you assign the base motive?'

'I don't blame him a bit.'

'I do, if—if what you think is true.'

'How ungenerous!'

'Why should he not want to ask for little details about his wife?'

'He is a man, my dear, therefore he pursues the quarry which till now has escaped him.'

'Then I'm in the most horribly embarrassing situation.'

'You are. It's dramatic. I foresee comedy and, perhaps, tragedy.'

'Miranda, you frighten me. I'm a coward. Mr. Napier and Mrs. Tower believe me to be brave and cool-witted. That's on the surface. I'm always acting on impulse and then regretting it.'

'Regretting it? Oho!'

'I do not regret the impulse which drove me from Mont Plaisir.'

'Never? Come, come, between old friends let the truth prevail!'

'Never—in my sane moments. But why did I not refuse Harry when he asked me to—well, dissemble? I was weak as water at a critical moment. And I ought to have held out valiantly against Mr. Napier's importunity. Vanity! I wanted to keep his good opinion.'

'I believe you are falling in love with Mr. Napier.'

'Miranda!'

'He must be a cold-blooded animal if he's not falling in love with you.'

'Please!'

'I'm a coarse, common, old woman, who cares little for anything or anybody, but who would like to see you in clover before she turns up her rheumatic toes.'

What might be said or done after this? Could Esther soar into the empyrean, leaving so stout a friend fatly sitting on mother earth? And if she remained she must eat and drink Miranda's food, and listen to Miranda's talk: the fare provided for body and mind being of the rump-steak pudding sort, with bread and cheese and a glass of strong ale to follow! Also, if long in her company, Esther became conscious of a temptation (strenuously resisted) to sit at ease in dressing-gown and slippers.

Walking back to Harley Street, she asked herself very soberly, Was Napier's interest in her likely to warm into a more ardent attachment? When his work was done, did he think of her, as she had begun to think of him?

For, at last, he had taken hold of her imagination, although her fancy, in the sentimental sense, still remained merely lukewarm. He began to appear as a possible paladin: a paladin disguised and afoot, a very different figure from our magnificent Harry, armed *cap-à-pie* in shining armour, superbly mounted, and challenging the world. Napier must have had a tincture of humble Allen's blood in his veins. He was chivalrous when nobody was looking, although in this densely populated island it may be taken for granted that sharp eyes lurk behind every fence. Esther had heard of some of Napier's feats. Mrs. Tower, who never exaggerated, who would have recited the tale of Marathon or Trafalgar without a tremor in her voice, had spoken to Esther of fights fought to a

finish in London slums. Napier's spacious house was sanctuary for poor and rich. Above the rooms occupied by Lady Camber an overworked sempstress was undergoing similar treatment.

From thoughts of Napier, Esther turned with reluctance to speculate concerning Harry. Alice had given her to understand that my lord had been a faithful husband. She boasted of it shrilly, comparing him with other men of his world whose illustrious names fell trippingly from her tongue. But devotion and fidelity are not synonyms for passionate love. Was Harry capable of passionate love? That would have saved poor Alice. Beneath its ardent beams she would have grown plump.

Harry, Esther reflected, and quailed at the thought, might have remained faithful to his first love! He had treated a doctor's assistant with indifference. Had he met her upon the old footing, had he betrayed by a quiver of the lip, by one faltering phrase, that she was still dear to him, Esther could never have consented to nurse his wife.

CHAPTER XIX.

ALICE ADORNS HERSELF FOR THE PALADIN.

UPON the following morning she saw Harry. Esther was sitting beside Alice when the discreet Buckle delivered the message. Mr. Napier was engaged. Could Nurse Yorke see his lordship for two minutes? Nurse Yorke replied gravely that she also was engaged. Finally, Alice—as had been foreseen—insisted upon Esther's descending to the library, where Harry, more monumental than ever, awaited her. He held a bunch of lilies in his hand.

In answer to his first questions Esther yielded to the temptation of speaking with greater optimism than was warrantable. Harry listened with dignified composure.

'She is responding,' he said, solemnly.

'Yes, that is quite the right word.'

'Please give her these lilies with my love.'

'Certainly. Your nosegays are a vital part of the cure.'

She was leaving the room, when he called her by name.

'Esther——'

'Wouldn't it be safer to say Nurse?'

'We are friends, eh?'

She was furious with herself for blushing. His gaze disconcerted her. And she saw that her blush pleased him.

'I don't think we can be friends, Lord Camber.'

'Why not?'

'I haven't time to answer such a question. Good-bye!'

'*A demain*,' he replied.

She flitted from the room, angry with him and angry with herself. Alice asked innumerable questions. Did his lordship look well? What was the colour of his necktie? Did he seem very anxious? Was he playing golf to distract him? Had he said anything about returning to Camber for the hunting? Esther answered these questions so satisfactorily that Alice exclaimed: 'You must see him every day that he is here.'

'Mr. Napier may disapprove.'

'I shall make a special favour of it. I feel as if I'd just swallowed half a bottle of fizz. Regular tonic, you are!'

Harry saw Esther upon several successive days, and, insensibly, they began to drift into something approximating to the old pleasant intercourse. The paladin behaved remarkably well, considering all things, and kept himself in hand. Alice, had she been present at these brief interviews, would have been satisfied with his exemplary behaviour. To do and say the right thing had become such a habit with our Harry, that it was difficult for him to break loose from it. Nevertheless Esther had an ever-increasing terror that he still loved her, and she could not help admiring his self-control and perfect manners. Daily, also, she considered the propriety, the necessity, of acquainting both Napier and Alice with the facts. She urged this upon Harry, but his obstinacy was great. He had changed his position for another more impregnable. Candidly he admitted that at the first shock of encounter he had exacted a pledge of silence from his beneficiary upon the ground that he did not wish to be exposed as an ass! But his second reason had been the better. Upon Alice's account silence must be maintained inviolate.

'You have placed me in a false position.'

'And you——? Did you not do just that to me?'

'Not willingly.'

He replied with warmth.

'I loathe deceit. But we mustn't think of ourselves. I promised Napier to co-operate cordially with him. Everything that is possible must be done for my poor wife.'

Everything possible was done and the patient responded.

At the end of a fortnight Harry returned to Camber for the

opening meet of the Quorn. He left instructions at his florists' that flowers were to be delivered in Harley Street every morning at ten, and, taking leave of Esther, he sent some charming messages to his wife. The smile with which Esther speeded his departure may have been slightly beaming, but it vanished when he announced his intention of writing to her.

'Is that necessary?'

'My poor wife cannot write or receive letters. I'm entirely dependent upon your kindness and good nature.'

'You needn't write. I'll send postcards.'

'I shall answer them.'

With that he went his way, head in air and chest finely inflated. Assuredly he had a liberal faculty for dealing with difficulties and perplexities which keep anxious women awake at night. One felt convinced that his conscience was as clear as his skin. Esther told Miranda with undisguised glee that he had departed.

'Has he made love to you?'

'How dare you ask such a question?'

'He let you see that you are still the one and only?'

'The one and only is—himself.'

But as she affirmed this, with a determined nod of the head, she knew that she was not quite fair to him.

'How ungenerous of you to say that!'

'You drive me into corners.'

'Obviously your machine of a doctor has cut him out.'

'If you talk like that I shall run away.'

'Is the wife really better?'

'By pounds and pounds and pounds!'

'Um! Sabrina dies and she lives, and you believe in an All-wise Personal Providence!'

'I believe in a personal devil, when you are in this vein.'

Miranda only chuckled.

Harry wrote letters. He had enjoyed a capital gallop on Thursday, but his second horseman had not turned up in time, so he had missed an even better hunt in the afternoon! The hedges were awfully blind. His neighbours were very sympathetic and hospitable. He had laid down a pipe of Dow's port. It was an experiment, because his uncle, not a bad judge, had always sworn by Cockburn. He was thinking of rebuilding the stables at Camber. . . . Esther remembered that in the old days he had always talked in this strain, taking for granted that the subjects near to

his heart must be of absorbing interest to others. She replied with postcards, writing them in Alice's room, beside Alice's bed. A fair sample of these wares is submitted.

'Steady improvement. A gain of half a pound yesterday. Patient sends love.'

At the bottom of each card Alice insisted upon executing a cross in pencil. All the Snellings did this with or without provocation. Esther watched her with a drawn feeling at the heart, for she was desperately sorry for her patient, in spite of many peevish moods, alternating with a gushing familiarity and affection perhaps harder to bear.

Meanwhile her relations with Napier were monopolising what attention she could spare from her patient. At the end of a month Napier became triumphant. A miracle had been wrought. As in the duchess's case, he awarded the credit to Esther. 'You are a witch,' he said, again and again. He did what she had never known him to do with other nurses, he discussed the case exhaustively. And he spoke of other cases. She perceived that his whole soul went out, upon the wings of an immense pity, to relieve distress. His pale, thin face glowed with feeling when he spoke of starved bodies and brains, of children without food or toys or love, of women beaten by drunken husbands, of girls driven on to the streets: all of them bred in the slums, condemned to live and die in the slums, and to bring forth myriads as wretched and forlorn as themselves. And he railed against the indifference of the more fortunate, intent only upon comfort, furious if their peace of mind were disturbed; blind and deaf to what groaned and travailed within a few hundred yards of their cosy hearths and well-spread tables.

'It's something to be proud of, isn't it?' he demanded. 'We think ourselves—and we are—the greatest race on earth, and in London alone a quarter of a million children have not enough to eat! Glorious—eh?'

By the look on her face, by her wet eyes, by her quivering lips, he knew that she knew, that she, also, had been down to the depths, and that, like a soldier who has survived a stricken field, she could not bear to speak of what she had seen and endured.

'And the worst of it is,' he concluded, 'they have not the spirit to fight against the appalling conditions under which they exist.'

Nevertheless he was no pessimist, although scornful of those contending that all was for the best in the best of worlds. Success,

she could see (as in the case of Lady Camber and the little sempstress), intoxicated him. When he appeared sad and absent-minded, with a look in his eyes as if he had lost something, Esther divined that his skill had been of no avail, that some life for which he had fought was guttering out, leaving him in temporary darkness.

At the end of five weeks he yielded to his patient's solicitation to see husband and maid. The change wrought in Alice's outward appearance was really remarkable; her pink and white prettiness had come back, her eyes sparkled; the scales recorded even a greater increase of weight than that achieved by her Grace. She took delight in choosing the most ethereal *peignoir*, a pale blue and white affair, very virginal, in which—so Esther assured her—she looked not a day older than eighteen. She sent for the trinkets which Harry had given to her before marriage; in a word, she dressed the part, so as to appear what she had been when the paladin laid all he possessed at her feet. Esther assisted with enthusiasm. She also apprehended the importance of a *coup de théâtre*. So much depended upon this first meeting. But Esther's enthusiasm was make-believe, part and parcel of the comedy carefully rehearsed. Inwardly, she was conscious of acute depression. She could not have explained this. Perhaps instinct told her that these elaborate preparations were all in vain; that the paladin, as before, would not justify expectation, would not—as Miranda might say—play up!

Upon the eve of Harry's arrival, just after the full-dress rehearsal, when Alice, arrayed in the wonderful *peignoir*, had chosen her exact position in the sitting-room adjoining her bedroom, Napier said to Esther:

'I can't disguise from you that the heart worries me even more than I care to admit. We shall have to be very careful, because I dare not tell her the truth. Now that she is out of bed she will insist upon doing too much. Your hard times are ahead.'

'I know that.'

'She thinks herself cured, and I wish her to think it, provided she does not presume upon it. However, she won't be allowed on her feet unless you are present. Watch her. That is the last word.'

Upon the morrow everybody in the house knew that Lord Camber was coming at eleven to see his wife. Something of the excitement attending a marriage was in the air. Many flowers arrived, arranged by Esther in the sitting-room, a charming apartment, gay with the freshest chintz, and distinguished by decorations

of Adam. A large three-sided cheval glass was brought from Grosvenor Square. After being arrayed in the *peignoir* by Esther, Alice was allowed to survey her own captivating image. She laughed and clapped her hands.

‘What will Harry say?’

That was the rub. What would he say, this master of the right word, this precision in propriety? Esther felt almost impelled to waylay him in the passage, and to whisper, ‘Kiss her as you kissed her when she promised to become your wife. Tell her again and again and again that she is prettier than ever. Praise her gown, her shoes, her silk stockings. Notice the little diamond heart which will lie above her own. When you sit by her hold her hand in yours! And smile, smile, smile, from the moment you enter the room till you leave it.’

Could she have said that, had he acted upon such sound advice, how much misery might have been avoided!

The three-sided mirror reflected Esther also. The demure nurse, in uniform, wearing white cuffs and cap, served as an excellent foil to her sparkling patient.

‘Stand by me,’ said Alice.

For the first time they stood shoulder to shoulder, staring into the depths of the glass, both smiling. Then Alice, with a little hysterical cry, flung her arms about Esther’s neck and kissed her.

‘I love you, I love you,’ she whispered, ‘because I believe you have given me back my husband.’

‘Say that to Mr. Napier.’

‘I could hug him too. But you, dear, have done the trick.’

Esther led her gently to the sofa in the next room.

‘Lie down and keep perfectly quiet!’

‘I could dance.’

‘You will—if you are patient—later on.’

‘What time is it now?’

‘Twenty-five minutes to eleven.’

‘Will they ever pass?’

Then, as Esther adjusted a cushion Alice added:

‘I shall tell Camber that he must settle something handsome on you for life.’

Esther winced.

‘You mustn’t think that money is everything to me, or to Mr. Napier. We have earned our fees, perhaps—’

‘I should think so, and jolly glad you must be to get ’em.

When I was at the halls I stuck out for every penny I could come by. And, of course, Mr. Napier does the same.'

'Not always,' said Esther. 'The patient who had the rooms above you left yesterday. She had the same care and attention that you have had. As you know she worked for one of the big dressmakers at a sweating wage. For three days before she left her nurse noticed a slight reaction; she seemed to be distressed about something. Mr. Napier asked her what she had on her mind. Finally, she confessed that the thought of his bill was worrying her. He told her not to worry, but she did. Then she sent for him, and asked point blank what his charge was going to be. The nurse told me his answer.'

'He said "Nothing," I suppose.'

'He put it more delicately than that. He said, in his rather solemn way, "Do you know, I have searched all through my books, and I can't find your name anywhere." With that he hurried away, and the nurse had to explain exactly what he meant.'

'He's a good sort, although he is so plain. What time is it now?'

'Twenty minutes more! A watched pot never boils, although—'

'Well?'

'I was going to add a watched husband does.'

'Do you think I watch Lord Camber?'

The quick personal application answered the question.

'Lord Camber doesn't need watching.'

'As to that, I don't know.'

Her lovely eyes filled with tears. Esther, pretending not to see them, moved to the windows and adjusted the blinds.

'Leave the blinds up,' said Alice sharply. 'I'm not afraid of the light now. I want him to see my skin, to stare at it. He knows that I'm quite capable of touching myself up.'

Esther came back, smiling.

'Do you think he'll be punctual?'

'Of course!'

'There's no "of course" about it.' She laughed excitedly and Esther held up a warning finger. 'Oh! it's no use your doing that. If he isn't on time to the minute I shall jolly well know that he doesn't really care as I care. There—it's out! I can't bottle things up with you.'

'He will be here to the minute.'

But in her heart of hearts Esther was not quite sure of this. She

remembered when she had waited for him. He had come, but not to the minute. And now every minute would count enormously, disastrously, to this expectant, excited, half-hysterical creature. She began to distract her patient with such small talk as she could wring out of a brain already overworked. Alice lay still, obviously not listening to a single word, every fibre of her body strung to the highest tension.

Eleven struck.

'Look out of the window,' said Alice. 'He will come in an electric brougham.'

But no electric brougham was to be seen in the long, rather dismal street. Esther, feeling like Sister Anne, returned to the sofa to find her patient trembling. She placed her cool fingers upon the hot forehead.

'Many things may delay Lord Camber,' she said quietly. 'You must pull yourself together; let him find you at your very best.'

'Do you think that I'd have been late if he was lying here?'

She spoke passionately, with a vehemence and intensity that proclaimed her fierce hunger for love, and her terror that she might remain hungry and, ultimately, starve because a stone was offered to her in lieu of bread.

'Shush-h-h! The motor may have broken down.'

'Not it! And we shall be able to pick holes in any excuse he'll have. You'll see.'

'A block in Oxford Street, a clock too slow——'

Alice interrupted shrilly:

'He is late because he doesn't care.'

'You have no right to say that.'

Nevertheless, at this moment, perhaps for the first time in her life, Esther hated Harry. It was ridiculous to condemn him unseen and unheard, and yet—and yet—he ought to have been punctual even if the heavens were falling. As the minutes crawled by, her pity and sympathy for Alice deepened. Words she felt to be worse than useless. In silence both women waited and waited.

At half-past eleven poor Alice burst into hysterical laughter and tears.

Five minutes later, erect, smiling, with flowers in his hand, and a flower in his coat, our paladin marched majestically into the room!

(To be continued.)

MOTHER AND CHILD.

By old blanched fibres of gaunt ivy bound,
 The hollow crag towers under noon's blue height.
 Ribbed ledges, lizard-haunted crannies white,
 Cushioned with stone-crop and with moss embrowned,
 Cool that clear shadow from the outer glare
 Above a grassy mound,
 Where she that sits mused with lips apart
 And eyes dream-filled beneath the abundant hair,
 And lets the thoughts flower idly from her heart.

Thoughts of a mother ! For her child amid
 Light blossoms that a brook's cold ripple fledge,
 Wind-shaken at the shadow's glowing edge,
 Plays with a child's intentness ; now half-hid,
 And now those gay curls, caught in frolic sun,
 Toss to the breeze unbid,
 And through the thoughts of her who watches shine
 With quiverings of felicity that run
 Through all her being, as through water wine.

Her thoughts flow out to the stream's endless tune.
 Ah, what full sea could all that hope contain ?
 Then apprehensions, vivid like a pain,
 Wing after, swift as through this airy noon
 The swallow skims and flashes past recall,
 But, O, returns how soon,
 Back in a heart's beat ! so her fears have sped
 Far as the last loss—homeing out of all
 The deep horizon to that golden head.

The child, amid the blossoms, nothing recks.
 His eyes a flame-winged dragon-fly pursue
 Over tall heads of mint and borage blue
 In warm and humming air ; on slender necks
 Marsh-flowers peep eager over juicy rush,

And the wild parsley flecks
With powdery pale bloom stalks his bare feet bruise.
And hot herb-odours mingle where they crush,
Wet in the green growth and the matted ooze.

Over a smooth stone laughing water slips,
Bearing a petal to the eddy's dance,
And under bushes the blown ripples glance.
Now the wind lifts a long spray's leafy tips
And dashes them with drops of twinkling fire
As in the stream it dips,
Where over shadows bright with wavering mesh
Bramble and thorn and apple-scented brier
Twined roots and low leaves thirstily refresh.

His mother calls ; and over thymy sod
The child comes ; yet he lingers ; the flowers keep
His feet among them, clustering fair and deep.
Red crane's-bill shakes its seed ; milk-campions nod ;
By the plumed sorrel little pansies hide ;
Slim spikes of golden-rod
Above the honeyed, purple clover flame ;
And where the sheltered dew has scarcely dried,
Cling worts, close-leaved, each with its own wild name.

What secret purpose infinitely wrought,
Each in its lovely kind and character,
These breathing creatures in the light astir,
Articulating new an endless thought,
That still with some last difference refines
The likeness it had sought ?
Some bloom to mateless glory will unfold,
A grace undreamed some airy tendril twines,
Some leaf is veined with unimagined gold.

Thee, too, child, with life budding in thy face
And quickening thy sweet senses, O thee too,
For whom the old earth maketh herself all new,
Each hour compels with unreturning pace
From the vague twilight being that keeps thee kin
To all the unconscious race ;

Compels thee onward ! For thy spirit apart
The habitation is prepared within ;
The separate mind, the solitary heart.

Is it a prison the slow days shall build,
When, disentwining from the world around
Thou gazest out of eyes at last unbound
On alien earth, with other purpose filled,
Thou with the burden of identity,
Thou separately willed,
And feel'st at last the difference thine own
Mid thy companions, saying ' This is I,
I, and none other in the world's mind alone ? '

Thine eyes are lifted now from the small flowers,
And the sky fills them : boundless and all pure
Regions afar to thrilling silence lure.
Ah, how to charm the fret of future hours
Shall to thy mind come, as from wells of light
And time-forgetting powers,
Words large and blue and liquid as the sky ;
The absolution of the infinite,
And sea-like murmur of eternity.

Shalt thou not long then, when the dark hours wring
Thy heart with pangs of mortal loss and doom,
That old unsevered being to resume
With a kind ignorance, relinquishing
This self that is so exquisitely made
To suffer ; time's dull sting
To lose, and the sharp anguish, and the wrong ;
Into life's universal glow to fade,
And all thy weakness in that whole make strong ?

Yet O thou heart so surely doomed to bleed,
Thou out of boundless and unshaped desire
Compacted essence single and entire,
Rejoice ! In thee earth does herself exceed.
O tarrier among flowers, of thee the unplumbed
Infinites have need ;
Or how shall all that dumbness speak, and how

Those wandering blind energies be summed
As in a star? Rejoice that thou art thou!

Mighty the hosts that desolate and kill,
Armies of waste and ravage: and alone
Thou com'st against them in the might of one
World-challenging and world-accusing will.
Yet mightier thou that canst thy mind refrain,
The world's want to fulfil,
Thy soul disprison from time's mortal hour,
To pardon and pity changing the old pain,
And in thy heart the eternal Love let flower.

All faith inhabits in thy mother's eyes.
Yet she already hath all thy pangs foreknown
And in thy separation felt her own.
Far from her feet follow thy destinies!
There is no step she hath not trod before.
Her loss she glorifies
To spend on thee her all; and to defend
That divine hope which in her womb she bore,
Those arms of love wide as the earth extend.

LAURENCE BINYON.

VICARIOUS CHARITIES.

A DIALOGUE.

BY MARY CHOLMONDELEY.

MARCELLA. I have just been reading Oscar Wilde's 'Intentions.' Apart from the dreadful cleverness of the book, and his ingenuity in turning every subject he touches inside out, I am enviously impressed by the manner in which he has chosen to write it, by his vehicle so to speak.

JULIAN. How do you mean ?

MARCELLA. Well, the way in which he casts his essays in the form of dialogues, which enable him to skip from point to point in the most irresponsible manner, and allow him to appear to meet his antagonist without really doing it. That is the kind of person I am always looking for. Someone with a head on his shoulders who will oppose me sufficiently to bring out my opinions, and yet have the good taste so to frame his questions or his disagreements that I can easily get the better of him in argument.

JULIAN. You are not hinting, are you, that you want my co-operation in this peculiar field of labour ?

MARCELLA. I am not hinting it. I am suggesting it.

JULIAN. And how about my real opinions ? How about my integrity, my honour, my truth, my immortal soul ?

MARCELLA. I have no use for them. All I need is an adroit listener and questioner who will see to it that I am not put in a corner, or shown up to the reader ; who will in fact behave like a man bowling at royalty—make a good game, but bowl rather wide.

JULIAN. I don't see where my material advantage comes in.

MARCELLA. In the price of the article, which we will divide between us.

JULIAN. I'm your man. What is your subject ?

MARCELLA. Vicarious charities.

JULIAN. Are you for or against them ?

MARCELLA. Against them, of course.

JULIAN. Well, I should be for them if I were you. You'll never get up a healthy argument against them. You won't have a leg

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to stand on, however much I bolster you up. If we didn't give at other people's expense we should never give at all. At least I shouldn't. And I flatter myself I am very far above the average of 'the mere man.' The very tap-root and main-spring of modern charity is getting money out of someone who does not want to give it.

MARCELLA. If that is what you call being a listener and a questioner I don't see where my views come in.

JULIAN. Well, I suppose it takes two to make a dialogue.

MARCELLA. Not a bit of it. It takes one, namely myself. Kindly keep in mind that I do *all* the dialogue, and you head me off dangerous ground.

JULIAN. And this is what you call equality between the sexes!

MARCELLA. Not at all. I call it business.

JULIAN. I see. Well, go ahead. I'm all attention.

MARCELLA. I have just been to tea with the P.'s. I met there S.'s daughter. You remember old S.

JULIAN. Perfectly.

MARCELLA. Miss S. is charming, and all she wears is charming. We had a little talk over a muffin, and I was just coming away when the usual thing happened.

JULIAN. What? I presume the one word *what* is what you intend me to say.

MARCELLA. For the moment it will do. The usual thing is that she very shyly and sweetly asked me to give her a copy of my last book for a charity.

JULIAN. And you refused? That dear little girl! Women are like nether millstones to each other. I have always said so, and I say it again. They have no more feeling for their own sex than——

MARCELLA. Thank you. That will do. I did not refuse because she is, as you say, such a dear little thing, and it is well known that in years gone by I had a *tendresse* for her father. But I ought to have refused.

JULIAN. Refused whom? Her or her father? I don't understand.

MARCELLA. Her, of course. The trouble was that I never had the opportunity of refusing him.

JULIAN. Well, I think you would have been a beast if you had—her, I mean, not him. I can't myself recall having ever had a *tendresse* for her mother, but she—Miss Kitty—asked me for half

a crown last week to help to christianise India, which of course I heartily disapprove of.

MARCELLA. Then you did not produce your half-crown?

JULIAN. Yes, I did. It is easier to get blood out of stone than a coin out of me. But she said it was such hard work asking, and I really had not the heart to make it harder by refusing. I know I would rather break stones on the road than ask anyone for half a crown myself.

MARCELLA. It was four-and-six in my case. Cash price for 'The Vampire's Bride.'

JULIAN. Well, you can afford four-and-six once in a blue moon.

MARCELLA. It isn't once in a blue moon. It's all the time. If it isn't Kitty some other sweet creature wants an autograph volume for a bazaar, or urges me to take tickets for a charity matinée, or makes me buy a book about a lifeboat. I can only just find money for the charities which I do support without having my hard-earned four-and-sixpences wrung from me by force.

JULIAN. You can't call Miss Kitty's gentle whisper force.

MARCELLA. I can and do. These charming young girls trade on our weakness and their charm. It is wrong of them to ask and weak of us to give. If I had daughters of my own I would teach them that it is *infra dig.* to do your charities at other people's expense.

JULIAN. Oh, now I see what you are driving at! But I warn you you won't make your point. You say it's my duty to head you off. Then don't try to prove that a girl of eighteen is to be blamed for trying to collect money for a good object.

MARCELLA. If she wants to collect money let her do something to make it, and if she can't make it let her dress less perfectly, instead of begging. She says it is hard to beg. And so it must be, for she has to vanquish an innate repugnance before she can bring herself to it, at least many girls have. But that innate repugnance is not a thing she ought to try to vanquish. Her parents ought on the contrary to foster it in her, instead of encouraging her to ignore it. If she really has a charity at heart let them instead advise her to work for it, or as I said before to spend her pin money on it. It won't do her the least harm not to rustle as she walks. Let her wear a moreen petticoat as I do instead of a silk one. That would be a gain of at least eighteen shillings, the price of four novels, representing four distinct assaults on trembling authors.

JULIAN. But allow me to remind you, my dear Marcella, that, much as we all respect and like you, the world would be a sadder place if young girls imitated your hygienic style of costume.

MARCELLA. I don't pretend to dress. I am only upholstered. And I have not the faintest wish to see anyone else attired as I am. 'One is enough,' as Emerson said to the man who wanted his son to be like himself. But——

JULIAN. And are you not forgetting that Miss Kitty does not beg for herself?

MARCELLA. Yes, in a way she does. Everyone who asks others for their money is trying to do good at the expense of someone else. Let each give what he or she can afford, or martyrise their own relations. That is what relations are for. It does not matter worrying them, because they don't mind refusing. In fact, they rather enjoy it. They are always in high spirits afterwards. It's part of the beauty of the tie of blood that all civility is eliminated.

JULIAN. Then you would not allow people to ask for money at all?

MARCELLA. Never socially. Society ought not to be a Tom Tiddler's ground on which pretty prowlers are trying to pick up gold and silver. I would encourage appeals in the way of vouched-for pamphlets and advertisements. Let great needs be made public. But then we would-be non-subscribers would have a way of escape.

JULIAN. You mean the waste-paper basket?

MARCELLA. A waste-paper basket has its uses.

JULIAN. Then the question in your mind is how it should be done, rather than that it should not be done at all.

MARCELLA. I am gratified to note your gleam of comprehension. Of course I know that money *must* be asked for. The Charity Organisation Society has an admirable plan of publishing deserving cases in the papers from time to time, and what could have been more touching than Miss Rhoda Broughton's published letter on behalf of the blind? Several people I know, and probably many I don't know, have given annually to that particular charity ever since for which she never personally asked for a penny. And it is, I suppose, legitimate for a Countess to let anyone pay 50*l.* to dine at the same table as herself at a charity dinner, if he is so strangely constituted that he wishes to do so. It is rather horrible, but it is a bargain. But we who don't want to give indiscriminately ought not to be harried when we think we are safe and among

friends. We ought not to be bled at social gatherings. We ought to be sacred even to the most blood-thirsty collector if we are staying under her roof. We ought not to be asked to do things which we can hardly refuse. In short, we ought not to be put in a corner.

JULIAN. Now you are beginning to repeat yourself without having made your point. I warned you that you could not make it. Let me advise you to pass on to some other part of your subject, where possibly you may be on firmer ground.

MARCELLA. I was just about to do so. Do you remember how Lady Bell said once that society is not a philanthropic institution?

JULIAN. What is it then? Solely a marriage market?

MARCELLA. It is an institution to enable people to meet for the pleasure of meeting, and for no other consideration whatsoever.

JULIAN. I don't seem to recognise any feature of society as I know it from that definition. But I suppose I am intended to let that pass, and humbly to ask you to explain what you mean by society not being a philanthropic institution.

MARCELLA. Society is not intended for those who have axes to grind even if it is an impersonal axe. Whenever an axe is seen——

JULIAN. To grind!

MARCELLA. Whenever it is seen even in outline under a man's coat pleasure vanishes, and for the sake of pleasant intercourse society exists. I might say that when an axe comes in at the door pleasure flies out of the window.

JULIAN. You might say anything, but for once I rather agree with you. That is why I hate political society, also partly because I am never invited to it. And I'm not sure I don't dislike all professional society for the same reason. It is so obvious that there is some motive quite apart from the pleasure of his company to account for the presence of each guest. And if you know one lawyer, one doctor, one clergyman, you know the jokes of all members of all three professions. Would it suit you if I opined that fashionable society, the 'high life,' in which I believe you and your moreen petticoat occasionally insert yourself, has as many axes ready as any other set, has even in the language of floriculture as many 'hardy climbers' as the circles of the Stock Exchange?

MARCELLA. I am not to be drawn off the path by any red herrings, Julian. My contention is that numbers of kindly stupid people are always spoiling social intercourse by trying to do someone

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JULIAN. Kindness and goodness never count for much with you, I know.

MARCELLA. They do not in social things, any more than in charitable ones, unless they are backed up by wisdom. Besides we are all kind nowadays. All the most odious egotists I know do 'such kind things'; I suppose they do them just as the greatest liars speak truth sometimes—because it suits them. Do you remember the witty Bishop who said that the time of the wise was taken up in repairing the mistakes of the merely good? Well, merely good and kind people are the bane of society, not because they do kind things themselves but because they are continually trying to oblige others to do their ill-considered, short-sighted kindnesses for them. Benevolent-minded wet blankets are determined to introduce other wet blankets into cheerful gatherings. Look at Mrs. D., who says she can't take out her own niece. Of course she can't, because she is such a bore, and so she is always wanting me to ask her to my parties.

JULIAN. The niece is a superior sort of person, and very patient, I am told, with a most tiresome old father.

MARCELLA. Well, perhaps she is more of a cold compress than a wet blanket, but personally I don't want cold compresses at my little gatherings. What people like Mrs. D., who is a good old thing, don't realise is that to do efficiently certain kindnesses, especially to young girls, you must be powerful. Kindnesses that can only be done by the socially powerful are frequently and foolishly attempted by those who are only benevolent. Look at the woman who turns heaven and earth to get a girl invited to a ball, at which neither she nor the girl will know a single creature. Or if she is invited to a country ball in her neighbourhood because she can't be left out she may be relied on to take a string of girls with her without a single man. Then the moment she enters the room she has to go about imploring every other woman she knows who has brought a party to introduce their men to her particular girls. And if the girls are plain or dull or badly dressed, as they nearly always are—otherwise they would not be in the position of needing her help—they stand out, poor things. Or the charity of the bankrupt who brings them has to be uglily done at the expense of the few unfortunate young men who can be cornered into dancing with them. Numbers of older women try to do their

social charities at the expense of innocent young men who have never injured them ; and it is not surprising that young men, who are not half so silly as is supposed, have found it out, and object to be treated as pawns in the game, and refuse—sometimes, alas ! rudely, for they are not all wise—to become part of the philanthropic scheme of these good-hearted but unprincipled people.

JULIAN (*with sudden enthusiasm*). Hurrah ! Marcella. Hear, hear ! Now you are talking sense. Now I'm with you heart and soul. What I have suffered as a young man, what I still suffer as a middle-aged man, from—

MARCELLA. Just so. That will do. The behaviour of these pleasure killers reminds me of that of a clergyman's wife I know. The squire, a kindly man, had arranged an afternoon's rabbiting with ferrets, and he remembered the vicar's eldest son, a lad of fourteen, had just arrived home for the holidays, so he asked the boy to join him. The boy arrived as quickly as his legs would bring him. Trotting at his heels was a child of five with a letter from his mother, thanking the squire effusively for giving her son the pleasure, and saying her little Ernest, who was a very good child *and no trouble to anyone*, would love to come also, so she was venturing to send him. It was simply impossible to send back the poor little boy, flushed with anticipation ; it was equally impossible to take him on the round arranged over rough country, so the plan for the afternoon had to be given up, the keeper's work of the morning was thrown away, the rabbit holes had been stopped in vain. Nothing could be done except to potter round the gardens with a gun, and slip a desultory ferret down the nearest rabbit hole. Social philanthropists make the same mistake as the clergyman's wife : the mistake of not understanding what the entertainment is, and how very easily it can be spoilt by the intrusion of clumsy or inadequate people into it.

JULIAN. I'm with you, Marcella, I'm with you. In my days of sin, before I sat at your feet, I used to think that it was the climber, the axe-grinder, and the bore who ruined society. But if we could clear them all off the philanthropist would still remain to be abolished.

MARCELLA. Only the feeble philanthropist, Julian. If a woman is witty, light-hearted, and can make her house agreeable, in short, if she is powerful, she can carry through any number of kindnesses. And my experience of such women is that they do them by the gross. They are a godsend to the young. And *they* are in the

position to ask because they on their side are continually giving. Then, what sermons might be preached—why don't the clergy preach on subjects of this kind which touch our daily life?—on the unscrupulousness, the callousness of causing pain and inconvenience, of certain thrusting, stupid, religious persons who are bent on getting a post for an unemployable person. To be acquainted with distinguished or influential persons is for this species of social philanthropist merely an opportunity of getting something out of them. They don't care at all, they don't appreciate in the least what they have achieved. They have no interest in them, no admiration. They only want to be in a position to squeeze them. And you must have noticed, Julian, if you yourself are the friend of an influential person, be it a minister, or a Colonial governor, or an Archbishop, or a popular actress, that you have continually to protect them from assault. Pressure is always being put upon you to introduce to these luminaries someone whom you don't know yourself, or who you suspect wants something, or who it can be no pleasure to them to know, or who is not worth knowing. What time and temper I have seen wasted by introductions of 'wrong 'uns' to right ones by these ruthless trampers who say they want to do something for some unfortunate and probably unhelpable person, but who in reality want someone else to do it. What author has not been asked to wade through inane novels by people who can't write. What actress has not had futile young men and women forced into her presence who want to 'go on the stage'? What Colonial governor has not impecunious men shot at him for whom it is hoped he will be sufficiently unprincipled to give Government posts without knowing their capacities, or rather the special stripe of their incapacity? I remember a man, one of many coming down to a certain country house where a busy couple lived whose kindnesses were legion. He brought an introduction from a mutual acquaintance who had not for a moment considered the character of the invertebrate creature for whom she wanted a billet. All she had thought of was who in her acquaintance had most billets to give. He walked several miles up from the station. He arrived quite unexpectedly with his introduction about midday. He had to be asked to luncheon, at which he was an incongruous guest. He had to be interviewed afterwards. He spoilt the few hours of leisure of the day, and from the first moment it had been obvious that he was 'impossible.' The fact was patent before he had been asked to sit down. It had to be gradually impressed

on him by a kindly man who hated saying it. Oh, the waste of time, and the uncomfortableness of it, and the unnecessariness of it!

JULIAN. Hear, hear! But you know, Marcella, you talk as if everybody who wants anything is a 'wrong 'un.' There are a few right ones after all. And they sometimes need help.

MARCELLA. They cannot be helped by incompetent people. The right ones must be helped, as you say. But the stupid philanthropist never gets hold of the right ones. He can't differentiate. He does not realise that work and men can only be successfully recommended by a recommender who knows, and is competent to know, that they are very good. The ignorant philanthropist does not know a clever book from a silly one. He can't see the difference between a talent for acting and a love of 'dressing up'; between a level-headed youngster with a firm mouth and phonetic spelling who only wants a leg up, and a gritless creature who slips off every mount he is hoisted on to. It is the old story of the uneducated trying to do the work of the educated, the unskilled labourer in the field of philanthropy trying to grab at the place and wages of the skilled artisan.

JULIAN. Then would not you have stupid good people work for others at all?

MARCELLA. I would, I would. There is a vast area of work open to them, suited to their station and their mental means. I only ask them to stick to it. I should like to say to them, 'Take *in* someone to your house, instead of trying to take *out* someone to other people's. Have forlorn old governesses to stay with you, and tiresome, hysterical invalids who have quarrelled with all their friends. There is an enormous field open to you in these directions. Give overworked curates and their wives a change of air. Take charge of little boys for the holidays. Do books for the blind, and belong to clothing guilds. In short, do anything you like that you *can* do unassisted. Put yourselves to *any* inconvenience—we will not complain—but don't inconvenience others.'

JULIAN. Really, Marcella, I'm inclined to agree with you.

MARCELLA. Of course you agree with me. Should I have suggested this conversation if you had been an idiot?

JULIAN. And the conclusion we have arrived at is not one of startling novelty after all. If you want a thing done do it yourself. I almost feel as if I had heard that before.

MARCELLA. Or, rather, if you want a thing done be the kind of person who can do it. And if you are not the kind of person take a back seat. That is what back seats are for. You and I, my dear Julian, may find ourselves occupying them before long.

JULIAN. Speak for yourself.

MARCELLA. I have. I have said all I want to say.

MARY CHOLMONDELEY.

THE TALE OF THE EUREKA STOCKADE.

BY DR. W. H. FITCHETT.

ONLY twice in Australian history has been witnessed that grimmest of all political tragedies, an armed crowd and the regular forces of the Crown closing on each other in open and bloody conflict. New South Wales witnessed this spectacle in 1804, when Major Johnston scattered the convicts at Castle Hill. Victoria saw the same spectacle when, on the night of December 2, 1854, Captain Thomas—a soldier as daring and capable as Major Johnston—flung his tiny detachments of the 12th and 40th on the Eureka Stockade at Ballarat and crushed out what threatened to be an insurrection. The two events, of course, were widely different in character. Major Johnston stamped out a rising of convicts, and nobody has ever dreamed of erecting a monument to the men who fell under the musketry fire of the New South Wales Corps at Castle Hill, or were hanged, with the shortest possible shrift, by the authorities afterwards.

But the little slope at Ballarat where the Eureka Stockade once stood is a patch of classic soil. Memorials have been erected upon it to the men who fell on *both* sides of its rough barriers. One tablet records the names of the 'British soldiers who fell dead, or fatally wounded in brave devotion to duty on Sunday, the 3rd day of December, 1854.' A sister obelisk is 'Sacred to the memory of those who fell on the memorable 3rd of December, 1854, in resisting the unconstitutional proceedings of the Victorian Government.' The dust of soldiers and of diggers alike is thus treasured with honour. In that later and cooler judgment which time brings, it is seen that both the soldiers who attacked the stockade and the men who built it, and defended it, represented impulses which have a title to respect. But nobody will ever build a monument to the politicians of that day. To their incapacity may be traced the conflict in which so many brave men fell; and the only monument they deserve is a pillory as lasting as the pyramids.

The discovery of gold brought with it one legal problem of supreme importance. To whom did the gold belong? Did it lie

in the soil, the property of the first man who turned it up with a spade? Or did the ownership of the Crown shut round it even while it still lay in clay, or sand, or reef, hidden from human knowledge? The authorities asserted, and everybody accepted, the old feudal doctrine of the title of the Crown to all gold found on either private or public lands. There remained the practical question of the terms on which the right to search for gold should be granted, and the form in which these terms should be expressed. The authorities hit upon the plan of issuing a monthly licence to dig for gold, at a fee of 1*l.* 10*s.* per month, and all the after troubles with the diggers sprang from this unhappy choice.

The licence system was about the worst plan the wit of man could invent, carried out in almost the worst possible way, and by almost, if not altogether, the worst possible agents. The system was congested with vices. It was severe, it was capricious, it was unjust. A charge of 30*s.* per month, not for the possession of gold, but only for the right to search for it, was felt by the average miner to be exorbitant; and the rate fluctuated, now rising to 2*l.*, then sinking to 10*s.* The miner, again, who got no gold at all had to pay as much as the miner who found a fortune waiting for him at the bottom of his hole. A miner who, at the end of the month, found himself with empty pockets, and so could not pay his licence, was forbidden to try again and mend his ill-luck. To drive his pick into the ground without paying that preliminary 30*s.* was a legal offence.

Such a system was in conflict both with common sense and with human nature. And this bad system was enforced in a bad way. The licence money was collected by a policy of incessant raids, with the police as raiders. On one day in every week—later upon two days a week—the police rode out armed as if for battle, bailed up every miner they met, and demanded the instant production of his licence. The failure to produce it was followed by arrest. The unfortunate miner was handcuffed, marched to the camp, and usually chained to a log. His case was tried by the officer in charge of the camp, and the non-possession of a licence was punished by a fine of 5*l.* A miner who lacked the 30*s.* necessary to procure a licence was, of course, still more helplessly unable to pay a fine of three times the amount, and so he had to serve a term of imprisonment with hard labour.

The system revived the worst traditions in political history. It was a poll tax, and was collected by a policeman with the help

of a pistol and a pair of handcuffs. Raffaello, whose little book on the Eureka Stockade is a classic, expends his most vehement rhetoric on 'the incomprehensible, unsettled, impracticable ordinances for the abominable management of the goldfields which ordinances left to the stupidity of red tape How to Rule us Vagabonds.' 'Are diggers dogs or savages,' he cries, 'that they are to be hunted on the diggings, and commanded in Pellissier's African style to come out of their holes by these hounds of the executive?'

The miners, it must be remembered, were nomads; a vast multitude, hurrying incessantly from one 'rush' to another, and as destitute of settled habits of abode as so many birds of passage. How was it possible to collect every month, by a system of police raids, a poll tax of 30s. per month from, say, tens of thousands of miners, working in hidden gullies or scattered over hillside and plain, and flitting from one district to another like coveys of partridges? Governor Latrobe himself forgot, for once, the decorous prose of his official despatches, and described the whole business as 'a wild and ineffectual scramble.' The tax, as a matter of fact, was unprofitable to the Government that collected it. It yielded little cash, but an infinite amount of exasperation.

Now the miners were the last class in the world to submit patiently to incessant police interference. They were much in advance of the ordinary settlers in energy, intelligence, and independence of character. All grades of society found representatives among them, from barristers, doctors, cadets of noble families, graduates of universities, down to old soldiers, ex-policemen, farm labourers, sailors, &c. They lived a free life, pitched their tents where they pleased, worked what hours they pleased, and recognised nobody as master. Their calling was a proof that they had courage, a love of adventure, an impatience with routine beyond the average. But they were, on the whole, a law-abiding class, a fact to which both Governor Latrobe and Sir Charles Hotham bore frequent and emphatic witness. The moral temper of any class is best shown by the manner in which it respects—or does not respect—the Sunday; and all who knew them dwell on the reverence the miners as a class showed towards the Day of Rest. One keen observer, writing from Ballarat in November 1854—within three weeks of the tragedy of the Stockade—says, 'These Ballarat diggers are the most extraordinary rebels. . . . Anything more calm or becoming or regardful for the Sabbath could hardly be witnessed in the best towns of even Christian Britain than exists among the miners.'

How delightful,' he added, ' would it not be to rule such men well.' How marvellously stupid must have been the method of government which set such a class in open and bloody quarrel with the law !

But under the licence system the police were for the miners not protectors but enemies. They represented an instrument of oppression rather than a defence against crime. Nothing is more striking than to read to-day the fierce, hurried, energetic, and constant protests into which the miners broke out against the hated system and its administrators.

No statesman, in 1854, looking over the landscape with unclouded vision, but must have seen that the situation was crowded with elements of peril. Here was a system in force which exasperated the most numerous, the most energetic, and high-spirited class in the whole community. It was collected by a police universally hated, under the direction of officials whom nobody trusted. Above it was a Government which lacked intelligence to understand the trouble, wit to find a remedy for it, or willingness to employ a remedy if found.

Only one thing was wanted to make an explosion certain. The average Briton resents a meddling police, but will endure it with a patience that puzzles more fiery races. But suppose the hated police are corrupt as well as meddling ? Nay, suppose the sense awakens that life—as well as property and freedom—is not safe in their hands ! The deep, bitter, universal feud betwixt the miners and the police lacked only this single element, and an explosion must follow. And exactly this element was suddenly thrust into the witch's cauldron of the mining community.

Sir Charles Hotham had succeeded Latrobe as Governor. He was a sailor, with a sailor's frankness, a sailor's instinct for authority, and, it may be added, a sailor's furious incapacity for understanding, or tolerating, what seemed to be a mutiny. He had visited the diggings shortly after his assumption of office, and the hearty welcome he received showed that—apart from the vexation bred of the police raids—the general temper of the miners was contented and loyal. Hotham came back to Melbourne with the sanguine belief that no serious trouble was possible. But late on the night of October 6 a more or less drunken miner named Scobie was knocking at the door of a public-house of bad character on Specimen Hill, Ballarat, kept by one Bentley, an ex-convict, a man of very evil reputation. A scuffle took place in the dark, and Scobie's skull was split by a blow from a shovel. The coroner's jury returned an

open verdict, but there was good evidence that the blow had been struck by Bentley, and general public opinion against him was so convinced and passionate that the police arrested him. He was brought before the local court; on the bench were the police magistrate, Dewes, and two commissioners, Messrs. Rede and Johnston. The evidence against Bentley was strong, but he was discharged by the votes of two magistrates—Dewes and Rede—Johnston dissenting. Now Dewes notoriously had corrupt relation with Bentley; the sergeant-major of the local police, too, was known to be in Bentley's pay. And the scandal of seeing a corrupt magistrate on the bench acquitting a notorious ruffian like Bentley, who had killed a miner at his own door, sent a flame of anger through the whole mining community.

An indignation meeting was held, a large sum offered as a reward for the conviction of the murderer, and the prosecution of Bentley was sternly demanded. The meeting was held immediately in front of Bentley's hotel, and while it was still in progress the camp authorities sent down a body of police to guard the building. The police and the crowd were thus hustled together, and the process resembled nothing so much as that of thrusting a torch into a powder cask. There was a passion of excitement. A boy threw a stone at one of the hotel windows. The sound of the falling glass acted as a signal; it gave instant direction to the passion of the crowd. 'Down with the house! Burn it!' roared five thousand voices. The police were thrust aside. Someone hastily piled a little heap of paper and rags against the side of the hotel on which the hot wind was blowing, struck a match, and lit the heap. In a moment the red flame raced up the sun-dried wooden wall; it leaped over the roof; the house was a roaring mass of fire. Bentley, who was hidden in the house, expecting to be lynched, succeeded in reaching the stables undetected, mounted a horse, and galloped off to the camp and appealed for help. A detachment of soldiers came up at the double, but the mass of smoking ruins showed that popular vengeance, as far as the building was concerned, had completed its task.

Somebody must be punished for the crime; three persons were promptly arrested, and Sir Charles Hotham—who held the strong views of his profession on the subject of lawlessness—sent up an officer in whose decision and energy he had just confidence, Captain Thomas, to take command of the military on the spot and sternly enforce order. It was absurd, of course, to prosecute three

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men for an act for which a crowd of ten thousand were responsible, and these particular three, the evidence seemed to show, were conspicuously innocent of any partnership in the business of destroying the hotel. They were, however, committed for trial, sent to Melbourne, tried, convicted, and sentenced to terms of imprisonment. The jury appended to their verdict as a rider the statement that 'they would never have had their painful duty to perform if those Government officials at Ballarat had done theirs properly.' The English of that sentence is of the non-literary order, but its good sense is undeniable.

Meanwhile, a board of inquiry into the circumstances of Bentley's acquittal had sat, and the evidence submitted to it amply justified popular suspicion. Dewes, the police magistrate, and Milne, senior sergeant of police, were both proved guilty of corrupt practices and were dismissed; but it was believed that worse things were done by these men than the board of inquiry brought to light. Milne in particular was held in universal execration for notoriously evil practices. Bentley and his wife were re-arrested, tried for the murder of Scobie, convicted of manslaughter, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. The later career of Dewes shows the character of the man. He went to British Columbia, was found guilty there of embezzlement, fled to Paris, and died in that city by his own hand. Bentley, too, died a suicide.

The miners, meanwhile, were furious with wrath at the punishment inflicted on the three men convicted of assisting to burn down Bentley's hotel. They were known to be innocent of any direct partnership in that offence, and in any case popular opinion held the burning of the house to be a praiseworthy act, a blow struck for the purity of justice and the safety of human life. On November 11, 1854, a huge indignation meeting was held on Bakery Hill, and there was much exasperated oratory.

By this time a little group of political agitators had realised that the storm of popular feeling gave them an opportunity, and an audience. They captured the meeting at Bakery Hill. A Reform League was organised, a political platform announced. It would be absurd to expect sober and restrained speech from orators in such a scene, but the resolutions passed at that meeting are to-day amusing reading. 'It is not the wish of the League,' one resolution ran, 'to effect an immediate separation of this colony from the parent country . . . but if Queen Victoria continues to act upon the ill-advice of dishonest Ministers the Reform League

will supersede her royal prerogative by asserting that of the people, which is the most royal of all prerogatives.' 'This colony,' another resolution ran, 'has hitherto been governed by petty officers on the false assumption that law is greater than justice.' An 'utter want of confidence in the political honesty of the Government officials in the Legislative Council' was announced.

One of the orators of the day was Carboni Raffaello. He has written a distracted little history of the movement, but his book, with all its confusion, yet gives some of the best pen-pictures of the personages and the scenes in this curious drama.

Raffaello himself was a little, red-headed, fiery Italian, who had fled from his native country, and from the Austrian police, and come to Australia in search of a liberty spacious enough to satisfy him. His pursuit of liberty in Australia landed him in gaol. Humffray was secretary of the League, and afterwards became the representative of Ballarat in Parliament, and held the post of Minister of Mines. Raffaello describes him as 'a gentleman, born of a good old family; a fine forehead denoting astuteness, a pair of eyes which fascinate, a mouth remarkable for the elasticity of the lips which made him a model in the pronunciation of the English language; his voice a clear and undulating tenor, which enabled him to sway a crowd.' Humffray was by no means a firebrand; he lost influence, indeed, for a time with the crowd owing to his resolute opposition to violent methods. Vern, who came into prominence at this moment, was a Hanoverian, 'a long-legged windbag,' Raffaello terms him; a man 'with the eyes of an opossum, a common nose, huge mouth, no beard, a long neck for Jack Ketch, broad shoulders never broken down by too much work.' Vern did his best to push others into the fight, but, for himself, used his long legs in the hour of danger in running away.

The meeting on Bakery Hill despatched two representatives, Black and Kennedy, to Melbourne to interview the Governor and demand the release of the three men sentenced for taking part in the burning of Bentley's hotel. Black was a journalist, the editor of the *Diggers' Advocate*, a man of judgment and literary ability. Kennedy was an Irishman of a fine type. Humffray added himself to these two representatives in the interview with Sir Charles Hotham. In his very first sentence Black used a term which was fatal to the success of their appeal. 'We are here, your Excellency,' he said, 'at the request of the diggers of Ballarat to demand the release of Fletcher, McIntyre, and Westerby, who are now in gaol

under sentence for having been concerned in the burning of the Eureka Hotel.' Sir Charles Hotham was a seaman nursed in the traditions of the quarterdeck. He instantly challenged the word 'demand.' 'You demand, you say, the release of the men who have been convicted of burning the Eureka Hotel?' 'Yes,' said Black, 'the word "demand" we are requested to use on behalf of the diggers; they, from frequent disappointments, object to the use of the word "petition" now.'

The interview lasted for hours, but Hotham came back again and again to the guilty term 'demand.' 'Its use,' he declared, 'makes it impossible to grant what you request. I must take my stand on the word "demand."' For so much may two syllables count, even in great affairs!

The deputation returned to Ballarat, and told their tale to a meeting held on November 29, at which it was computed twelve thousand miners were present. The signal for the gathering was the hoisting of a new flag; the signal, some hoped—and many feared—of an insurrection. It was a blue flag, with the stars of the Southern Cross worked on it in silver. Two Roman Catholic priests were on the platform; beside them were the leading actors in the fierce, brief struggle which followed swiftly on the meeting: Peter Lalor, who was afterwards 'commander-in-chief' of the insurgent forces; Raffaello, who wrote the history of the struggle; Vern, the Hanoverian, who fanned the rising with windy rhetoric, and discredited it by cowardice when the fighting broke out.

The delegates who had gone to Melbourne told the story of their interview with the Governor. He had appointed a commission to inquire into their grievances; but refused to listen to that impolitic word 'demand.' The story kindled the anger of the crowd to fever heat. One orator who thrust himself on the meeting, and advised constitutional action, ran an imminent risk of being torn to pieces. Lalor, whose genius was practical, and who knew that the passion of a mob was short-lived unless linked as a driving force to some practical object, proposed that the Reform League should meet on the next Sunday at two o'clock to elect a central committee. This was carried; but the camp authorities were swifter than the Reform League, and before daybreak on that Sunday the Stockade had been stormed, Lalor himself was lying with a shattered arm, hidden beneath a pile of slabs, and Vern had disappeared beyond the horizon.

Vern proposed that the meeting should itself abolish the

obnoxious licence fee by the simple device of at once burning all licences. 'The united people,' his resolution ran, 'undertook under all circumstances to defend and protect anybody arrested for having no licence.' The chairman, Hayes, a shrewd and cool-headed man, realised the significance of this resolution. It was the pledge of a revolt. Before he allowed the crowd to vote on it he asked if everyone understood to what it committed them. Here is what followed :

'Should any member of the League be dragged to the lock-up for not having a licence, would a thousand of you volunteer to liberate the man ?'

'Yes ! Yes !'

'Would two thousand of you come forward ?'

'Yes ! Yes ! Yes !'

'Will four thousand of you volunteer to march up to the camp and open the lock-up and liberate the man ?'

A roar of 'Yesses' was the reply.

'Are you ready to die ?'

'Yes ! Yes ! Hurrah !'

A forest of hands—strong hands, brown with sun and toil—was held up for the resolution. From every part of the crowd revolvers were cracking in the air as the only adequate way of expressing the sentiments of their owners. A great fire was immediately lit, and thousands of licences were thrown into it and blown away in smoke.

The crowd passed another resolution, binding everybody to ignore the camp authorities in the settlement of all disputes as to boundaries, &c. They would decide these among themselves. They set up, in fact, a rude government of their own. A further significant resolution declared : 'This meeting will not feel bound to protect any man after the 15th of December who shall not be a member of the League on that day.'

That historic meeting was preceded by one unfortunate incident, and followed by another still more unfortunate. Hotham was pushing forward reinforcements in haste to the point of danger and detachments of the 12th and of the 40th were driven in carts from Geelong to Ballarat. They reached Ballarat just as evening fell, on November 28. When the officer in command came in sight of the hillsides, torn with the spades of the diggers and pricked with their tents, he halted his carts, made his men fall into column, with fixed bayonets, and proceeded to march, with something of military pomp, towards the Camp.

The news ran through the town like wildfire. Crowds of angry men gathered, with jeers and tumult, round the little column. The red-coated soldiers looked small and boyish-faced compared with these bearded and stalwart miners. The files were roughly jostled. The party in charge of the baggage, as it happened, had fallen considerably in the rear of the column. It was surrounded, the carts were overturned, and in the scuffle some of the soldiers were injured. An unfortunate drummer-boy was shot in the thigh; cases of ammunition in the carts were seized. The soldiers did not show fight, their officer gave no orders, and was only concerned to get his men safely to the Camp. But the column made a very undignified entry into Ballarat, and parties of mounted police had to be sent round afterwards to bring in some stray files who had been cut off. That incident not only served to raise public excitement to a yet higher temperature; it helped to kindle a mood of amused contempt towards the soldiers.

Then came a yet more unfortunate incident. The mass meeting of November 29 was a danger signal sufficiently ominous, but the Camp authorities, with incredible folly, chose the very next day for making another—and, as it proved, the last—police raid in search of licences. Sir Charles Hotham believed—and required his officers to act on the belief—that weakness in the presence of treason was itself the worst sort of treason; and he did not distinguish betwixt tact and weakness. He had directed that, in view of the disturbances, the law should be enforced more strictly than ever; and as the regulations required at least one police raid a week, on the day following the mass meeting—Thursday, November 30—Commissioner Johnstone, with a strong force of mounted police, sallied out and commenced the usual man-hunt among the tents on Gravel Hill.

It was like a military operation on hostile territory. The police moved with skirmishers in advance and cavalry on either flank. The infantry in the Camp were under arms as a reserve.

The news of 'another raid' ran like wildfire through every gully and across every hill. Huge crowds gathered, the insurgent flag made its appearance. Peter Lalor mounted a stump, rifle in hand, and shouted to all volunteers to 'fall in.' Raffaello says that Lalor took him by the hand, and, pointing to a number of foreigners who had naturally put themselves under Raffaello's leadership, said, 'If they cannot provide themselves with guns let each of them get a piece of steel five or six inches long attached to

a pole, and that will pierce the tyrants' hearts.' It may be suspected that there was more of Italy and of Raffaello than of Lalor and of Ballarat, in this advice. Some pikemen—the pikes were suggested by Irish experiences—were in the motley group.

The police, to intimidate the crowd, fired a volley over their heads, and were answered by volleys of stones from the crowd, with now and again the red flash of a revolver or a gun. Presently the police were shooting at miners trying to escape arrest; the volleys of stones grew sharper and the prick of rifle-fire more frequent. There were some wounded on both sides, and the Government forces at last fell back to the Camp, hot, dusty, defeated, but bringing half a dozen prisoners with them. Summing up the net gains, the resident Commissioner, Mr. Rede, reported that 'one policeman had his head cut open, one of the horses of the 40th mounted regiment was stabbed, a miner was shot through the hand, and eight prisoners were made. Had anything like a serious resistance been made, there would have been a very considerable slaughter. But our object was gained, *we maintained the law.*' It is difficult to imagine a more perfect example of the tyranny of a phrase. As a matter of fact the raid supplied exactly the touch of fresh exasperation needed to harden the temper of the crowd to open fighting point against the law.

When the police had disappeared within the barriers of the Camp, the insurgents' flag was carried to Bakery Hill. Over a thousand men gathered around it, armed with every variety of weapon, from rifles to pikes and spades. A British crowd does not readily lend itself to public performances of a theatrical sort, but there were sufficient foreigners to give a dramatic turn to the proceedings. An eye-witness describes how the miners in groups 'fell on their knees round the flag, vowed mutual defence, implored the help of God'—and then began to drill. Lalor, perched on a stump, gun still in hand, swore in his followers, the method being for a crowd to gather round him, and, with a forest of uplifted right hands, shout together the pledge of loyalty, and then give place to another group eager to go through the same performance. Till night fell that strange scene was kept up, men being sworn in, till the number rose to thousands. They were then roughly divided into companies and drilled under volunteer leaders.

That night a dozen of the leaders of the movement held a meeting in a little room 12 feet square, behind a grocer's store. A policy had to be adopted, a commander-in-chief chosen, a plan of

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operations agreed upon. Lalor had already shown a gift for leadership, and he was at once selected by a majority of votes for the post of general. 'I make no pretensions to military knowledge,' he told his confederates, 'but if once I pledge my hand to the diggers I will neither defile it with treachery nor render it contemptible by cowardice.' Raffaello was present, and reports the scene, and Lalor's rhetoric probably owes a little to his Italian genius. Raffaello describes Lalor as 'a strong-framed man, some thirty-five years old, with honest countenance, sober forehead, penetrating look, fine dark whiskers.' A Committee of Defence was formed, plans for collecting arms and ammunition agreed upon, and a message sent to the miners at Creswick calling for help.

No work was done in Ballarat next day. War was in the air. The Camp, silent and closely guarded, made no sign; but the insurgents were active. A strong patrol guarded the road to Melbourne and Geelong for the purpose of intercepting reinforcements. The famous Stockade was marked out, and its construction pushed on with greater haste than skill. It stood on a patch of sharply sloping ground, something more than an acre in extent, at a point where the Eureka lead curved by the old Melbourne road. Its surface was pricked with holes, a few tents stood on it. This little area was hastily enclosed with slabs, ropes, overturned carts, &c. It formed a business centre for the insurrection rather than a fortification. Friendly butchers brought cartloads of beef to it; crowds of sympathisers flocked in and drifted out again. Companies of riflemen were formed and drilled. A German blacksmith, familiar with revolutions in other lands, set up his forge and began to manufacture pikes. Parties were sent out to collect arms and ammunition. This work was done roughly, and in many cases degenerated into mere robbery. A little cluster of volunteer foragers would enter some store, and demand from the storekeeper, with levelled pistol, not only what guns or powder he possessed but goods of every sort. Receipts given for these levies, ill-spelt and vilely written, still survive; most of them conclude with the formula 'Hurrah for the people!'

On Friday, December 1, the rumour spread that there was to be another police raid, and Lalor drew out his forces in readiness for an open fight. But the Camp made no sign, though sometimes stray shots were fired into it by angry miners. It had been fortified with piles of firewood, trusses of hay, and bags of corn from the

commissariat stores. Everybody—including the clerks—was under arms. The women and children were sent for safety into the stores, which were believed to be bullet-proof. An attack was expected every moment through the night, and the mounted police, soaked through with rain, spent the hours standing by their horses, ready to mount and charge.

The insurgents were left to drill and collect arms all through the day, while in the Stockade itself the German blacksmith went on hammering and pointing his pikes far into the night. Towards sunset some 400 or 500 miners arrived from Creswick Creek, in answer to the appeal for help. They expected to find arms and provisions waiting for them, and when they found neither, there was much discontent, and the insurgents began to quarrel among themselves.

While the force in the Camp was under arms all night, expecting an attack, the Stockade, too, had been sleepless. 'Every hour,' says Raffaello, 'the cry broke out now on one front of the Stockade, now on another, "The soldiers are coming."' It was a cold night, a keen wind beat on the unsheltered crowd within the Stockade, and morning found them tired and discontented. By noon on Saturday it was clear there was to be no fresh licence hunting, and the bulk of the miners wandered off. A mass meeting was called for Sunday afternoon, and everything seemed to be postponed till that was held. Towards evening the miners drifted back into the Stockade again, and drilling went on with new ardour. There was some form of military organisation; sentries were placed, a pass-word was chosen—'Vinegar Hill'—a very ominous choice. Much heroic oratory was discharged into space, and some heroic resolutions were passed, among them one directing that anybody who tried to leave the Stockade should be shot. Vern, who proposed this resolution, himself ran an imminent risk of being shot, later, on the strength of it; for, when the attack of the soldiers actually came, he was the first to take to his heels.

Meanwhile in this whole distracted scene there was one cool brain with a clear purpose in it. Captain Thomas was a capable soldier, who could form a plan, keep it hidden in the cells of his own brain till the moment for action came, and then carry it out with swift and unfaltering resolution. He had seen—it may be suspected with soldierly indignation—an armed fort, with a strange flag, and men drilling for combat—built within cannon shot of the spot where the Queen's flag flew. But he also saw, with a soldier's

glance, that the Stockade was for him an opportunity. To attempt operations in the open against tens of thousands of miners scattered over many square miles of rough country would have been a business at once perilous and useless. Moreover, the miners, as a whole class, were not committed to the rising. But the Stockade drew all the dangerous spirits of the movement to one spot, a spot within easy striking distance of the camp.

In the daytime there were thousands of diggers in the Stockade, or about it, and an attack would be hopeless. Thomas could not be certain that, when night came, the majority of the diggers would wander away to their own tents; but he was reasonably sure that the night garrison of the Stockade was much less formidable than the huge crowd of drilling men which filled it through all the hours of daylight. And, moreover, a crowd of amateur soldiers, ill-armed and under amateur leadership, would be very likely to go to pieces in the confusion and tumult of a night attack.

Thomas was not the man to waste time, for with every hour that passed the insurrection grew more formidable. He gave no whisper of his plan to anybody, but he resolved to make his leap on the Stockade before daybreak on Sunday. He waited till night fell. The sound of voices in the streets had ceased; the lights had died out in the tents on the hillsides looking down in the town, the flame of a great bonfire in the Stockade sank. Then Thomas sent the whispered call to arms through the Camp. His plans were business-like, but his force was small. It consisted of 65 men of the 12th Regiment, under Captain Quade; 87 men of the 40th, under Captain Wise; 100 mounted police, 24 foot police—a total of 276 men; and by 3 A.M. they moved out in silence on their adventure.

The night was still black when the attacking force silently defiled from the Camp and began its march towards the Stockade.

Thomas had made his arrangements cleverly. Part of the mounted police swept round to the left of the Stockade to threaten its flank and rear. The direct attack was to be made by the detachments of the 12th and 40th; and, with a shrewd soldier's judgment, Thomas made his stroke at the Stockade where the slope was steepest. He judged that the attack would be least expected there, and that amateur troops, firing down a slope and in the dark, would be sure to shoot over the heads of his soldiers.

When the attacking party, marching in strictest silence, came within 300 yards of the Stockade, the detachments of the 12th

and 40th extended themselves in skirmishing order, and then advanced, still without firing a shot. Half the remaining distance had been covered when there was a stir within the Stockade; a dozen muskets flashed redly through the darkness on the troops. The Queen's troops had been fired upon, and the bugler, marching beside Thomas, at his word, sounded the call to 'commence firing.' Among the men in the Stockade was an ex-soldier who had seen active service in India under Lord Gough. The sound of the bugle woke him. He cried to his mate, 'That call means "Extend into skirmishing order." The military are here.'

For a few minutes the darting flames of musketry fire lit up the darkness along the line of Thomas' men and from the double breastwork of the Stockade. But discipline told at once. The firing from the Stockade was an intermittent splutter, the volleys of the soldiers were a sustained blast of sound that might have shaken more solid troops than those Lalor was trying to get into position. Raffaello, who was sleeping within the Stockade, was awakened by the sound of shots fired from the Stockade, and answered by the scream of the bugle from the attacking force. He ran out, and in the light of the fires still burning in the Stockade, saw the red line of the soldiers, with the little bugler in front, bugle to his mouth. He caught a sight, too, he records, of 'long-legged Vern' running across the Stockade, eastward, to escape, while one of the insurgent captains was directing someone to fire at the running figure.

At that moment, says Raffaello, 'the old command "Charge!"' was distinctly heard.' There was a sound of running feet, and then the red-coats—with the gleam of bayonets sparkling through the line of red—were scrambling over the barricade. There was a moment of hand-to-hand fighting. One of the 40th was killed by a pike thrust clean through his body. The German blacksmith, who had spent the day in forging pikes, tried to use one of the weapons he had forged, and attacked Lieutenant Richards fiercely. The soldier, however, parried the thrust of the pike with his sword, and replied by a stroke which literally sliced off the top of the unfortunate blacksmith's skull. The firing of the soldiers was deadly. Lalor had his left shoulder shattered. Ross, another leader, was shot in the groin. Yet another, Thonen, was killed by a bullet through the head. A group of pikemen stood together, and were shot down almost to a man.

In a few fierce minutes the fighting was ended. Of the insurgents, sixteen were killed, eight others lay dying of their wounds,

and probably others, who were carried off by their friends, and concealed, shared the same fate. Four of the soldiers were slain and eleven wounded. Captain Wise, who commanded the men of the 40th, was wounded by one of the first shots fired from the Stockade, but he still led on his men, and, while clambering over the barricade, received a second and mortal wound. One of the 40th, describing the struggle long afterwards, says, 'the diggers fought well and fierce, not a word spoken on either side till all was over.' As showing how inadequate was the armament of the insurgents, a loaded pistol was picked up in the Stockade after the fight, but it was charged with quartz pebbles instead of a bullet.

Lalor refused to be carried by his flying comrades from the Stockade, and was hastily concealed beneath a pile of timber. He lay here in safety for some hours; then, when the troops and police had marched away, he was rescued by some of his friends and carried to a hut where, for a time, he was sheltered. Medical attendance was secured, and his arm was amputated at the shoulder. He was smuggled to Geelong later, and lay there undisturbed—although 200*l.* was offered for his arrest—till the abandonment of all proceedings against the insurgents made it safe for him to emerge.

The list of the slain in the Stockade makes it quite clear that if some foreigners took an active part in the oratory before the actual shooting began, they had a very small share in the fighting itself. In the list of killed there are only two foreigners. The rest is made up of one native of New South Wales, two Canadians, two Scotchmen, three Englishmen, and ten Irishmen. The fighting impulse in the Irish blood, and the readiness in the Irish temper to take any part in proceedings against constituted authority, serve to explain the fact that more than half of the killed on that historic Sunday morning were Irishmen.

The troops marched back to the camp carrying their slain and wounded, and the captured flag of the insurgents. They took, in addition, no less than 125 prisoners, the majority of whom were dismissed the following day.

The moral effect of this resolute and well-planned assault was overwhelming. It was shown in the unresisting way in which the prisoners were secured. But the effect of the capture of the Stockade on the whole mining community was also great. The miners as a class stood aloof from the politics of the Stockade; they had too much solid sense, and a respect for the law too deep-seated,

to take part in what was practically an insurrection. The storekeepers, again, resented being harried by delegates from the rebels who levied contributions of arms and ammunition and stores from them, and gave no better equivalent than an ill-spelt receipt in the name of 'the people.' It was with a sense of relief that they witnessed the disappearance of the flag that waved over the Stockade, and knew that social order was restored.

To what may be called the civic mind, the use of armed troops in political disputes is about the last and worst blunder of which a Government can be guilty. It is an offence almost beyond forgiveness; and the authorities had been guilty of it. Public sympathy, too, is always apt to array itself on the side of the defeated. It resents what seems undue severity on the part of the victors. It was right, perhaps—though even this was conceded grudgingly—to crush, by musketry fire, what seemed to be incipient insurrection; but when the muskets were silent, the affair ought to have been reckoned as over. It was practically certain that no jury would bring in a verdict against the survivors of the fight on December 3, who were yet in prison; and an amnesty would have been both politic and generous. The Commission of Inquiry into the grievances of the miners had begun its work, and it urged the Governor to grant a general amnesty, or at least to stay, for the present, all legal proceedings against the prisoners.

But Sir Charles Hotham was inexorable. To a man of his temper, leniency towards men who had fired on the Queen's troops seemed nothing less than treason. He told the deputation who waited upon him that 'he should ill perform his duty to his country if he neglected to bring to justice those misguided men who had been induced to take up arms against the constituted authorities.' In February, accordingly, the Eureka prisoners were put on their trial in Melbourne, and there was skill shown by the authorities in the choice of the first case. It was that of a negro named Joseph; his black skin and alien blood, it was calculated, would chill popular sympathy as far as he was concerned. The evidence against him was overwhelming. No evidence was called for the defence. The cleverest men at the Bar had volunteered to defend the prisoners without fee, but their eloquence was practically unnecessary. The men in the jury-box reflected the general sentiment of the community, and promptly returned a verdict of 'Not Guilty'; and the astonished negro when he stepped out a free man into the streets discovered he was a popular hero, crowds pressing upon him to shake his dusky hand.

It was clear the trials must prove a fiasco ; but Sir Charles Hotham held on his stubborn way. Manning, the reporter of the *Ballarat Times* ; Hayes, who had been chairman of several meetings of the Reform League ; Raffaello ; a Dutchman named Vennick, were all solemnly tried. Their guilt was proved to a demonstration ; and each, in turn, was promptly acquitted by the jury. Sir Charles Hotham, however, learned nothing from these failures. He could not see that the Government was making not only itself but the administration of justice ridiculous. He wrote to the Secretary of State, ' If juries would not do their duty, I could discover no reason why I should not do mine.' Nothing served so much to destroy respect for the Governor himself as his stubborn persistence in these prosecutions. As a matter of fact, he never recovered popularity, and died six months afterwards, an embittered and disappointed man.

The report of the Commission of Inquiry into the state of the goldfields practically endorsed all the complaints of the miners against the licence system. It was ' unsuitable for the proverbially unequal fortunes of gold digging.' The universal resolve to evade it led to public demoralisation. The efforts of the police represented nothing but ' the continual disturbance of those who had paid in order to reach those who had not ' ; and the manner in which the miners were harried ' trenched very closely on the limits of human endurance.' It comments on ' those indiscretions of authority that could happen only on a goldfield, and because it could only happen there, it is the more likely to prove annoying.' The officials on the goldfields had sometimes been corrupt, often indiscreet, and generally unsympathetic towards the miners. An export duty on gold was recommended, the substitution of a ' miner's right '—a happy term—at a fee of 1*l.* per annum, instead of the monthly licence, and the appointment of wardens over the goldfields. The franchise was granted to the miners, and the first use of it was naturally to send to Parliament the most active spirits in the agitation which has been described. In the case of Peter Lalor, for example, his lost arm became a bit of political capital of imperishable value. He enjoyed, mainly by its influence, a seat in Parliament for over thirty years ; became, in turn, Commissioner of Customs and Postmaster-General, and held for eight years the Speakership of the Victorian Assembly, when he retired with a vote of thanks and a grant of 4000*l.* That vanished arm was of incomparably more service to its owner than the remaining and unhurt limb.

AN UNSEEN TERROR.

'It's all right. Harrison will be very glad to put you up for the night; or three nights if you wish it. He's not half a bad fellow, Harrison, though I confess I'm not exactly at my ease with him. He's too clever. However, you won't have to see very much of him; and anyhow you can hold your own about things; so I hope it will all turn out comfortable, and that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you at the meeting.'

The above was in a letter written by a college friend of the Rev. Arthur Craig, Vicar of St. Andrew's, the Episcopal Chapel at a small town in Sutherland; and the letter referred to the Church Congress which was to be held that year in Liverpool. A great number of the inhabitants of Liverpool offered hospitality to the clergy who flocked thither for the occasion. Many a man of small means was thankful for the welcome he found in one or other of the city homes whose doors were opened to him with so much hospitality. It was certainly so with Mr. Craig. The hotels were sure to be crowded and expensive; and very much pleased he was to hear that a lodging had been secured for him. From time to time during the long journey he thought of this, wondering also if he should 'get on' well enough with the family of entire strangers into whose midst he was to be thrust before the end of the day. At one moment he thought, 'I like new faces, there's always something interesting,' and the next he had turned round the other way, and said to himself, 'I rather wish I hadn't accepted; it is so impossible to know what to talk about, just at first. I don't even know if they are Church people or Congregationalists, or what. I wish I had asked Luttrell.' (That is the friend who wrote to him.) 'Too late now. I'm in for it, and must do my best.' So the Vicar entered into conversation with a fellow-traveller, and curiously enough found that he belonged to Liverpool and knew Mr. Harrison well by name, saying he was one of the first chemists in the town, with a bigger shop and a larger business than any of the other chemists. The fellow-traveller did not appear very willing to speak about him personally. Said he could converse about his business affairs, &c., and that was all he knew.

The long railway journey came to an end at last, and the stranger alighted from his cab at Mr. Harrison's door. The house was a well-built one, situated in one of the newer quarters of the city. As Mr. Craig stood on the doorstep and rang the bell he felt a look of comfort and wealth in the mere outside of it. Mr. Harrison gave a kindly welcome. He was a tall, thin man, with a somewhat austere countenance and rather grave, reserved manners.

After expressing a hope that Mr. Craig might be able to remain his guest for the full term of the Congress, he conducted him to the room prepared for him, after mentioning the dinner-hour, which was then not far off.

In the drawing-room before dinner Mr. Craig was introduced to the ladies of the family, Mrs. Harrison and her two daughters. It was an excellent dinner, all quite plain and simple and all in good taste, while the conversation was easy and pleasant. At dessert, however, when the servant had left the room, Mr. Harrison rather abruptly started the subject which of all others his guest would have rather let alone: the subject of spiritualism. It was in vain that he protested ignorance or even lack of interest. His opinion was sought again and again with the greatest pertinacity; his feeling about spiritualism was even extorted from him as it were. At last he was almost forced to confess that not only he was not a believer in the truth of it, but that if such things did exist, it were better not to meddle with them. Moreover, he said he was going to a very solemn meeting in the morning, and did not wish his mind to be distracted. And there he would fain have let the matter rest. Mr. Harrison, however, was not at all of the same mind about that. He went on arguing from his own point of view, and the ladies kept joining in on his side of the question, all being apparently entirely regardless of the fact that their guest, after the first few words and statement of his unalterable opinion, had sat there in silence, hearing, without joining in the heat of the argument. I think that this silent disagreement may possibly have served to aggravate the wrath of the family against him. Certain it is that Mr. Craig began to think things were getting too hot to be pleasant. When, after a time, making some sort of excuse of his long tiring day, he asked leave to retire to his room, he could not help remarking that his host's good-night was none too cordial. It appeared to him even cooler than the heated discussion that had been going on might warrant.

The room assigned to Mr. Craig was high up at the top of the

house, and quite large and comfortable. There had been a fire, but it had gone out and the grate was cold. There was great comfort, so it seemed to him, in being once more in a quiet place by himself, alone, apart from the worry of a loud, harsh voice, from the disagreeableness of assertion and dispute in which he took no sort of interest. He drew out from his bag a to-day's newspaper which he had not yet had time to read, and with that and some letters which had to be written an hour or two went swiftly by, before he thought of preparing for rest. It was past eleven when he sought his bed.

Then followed an interval of deep and dreamless sleep. Sleep so calm, filled with such refreshing power as might carry one through the longest day. . . .

Suddenly the bars of sleep broke up. In one instant he was broad awake, and sitting up in bed, oppressed by a mysterious feeling of some one in the room. He got out of the bed at once and felt about for matches. But before his hand touched them, the presence in the room, whatever it was, had sprung at him and seized him by the throat. The most awful struggle then ensued. Hour after hour it went on. Whatever it was, it tried to kill, to strangle him. It was a deadly fight for life.

. . . This is how afterwards Mr. Craig described that night to old Mrs. Erskine, his neighbour, and the close friend of many years.

'It was like a whole lifetime,' he said, 'of the extremest anguish and terror; like a long death-hour of agony. Whatever that presence, that fiend was, it possessed the strength of ten! If it loosed the awful grip of it for a moment with one hand (I call it *hand*, but in truth I know not what it was), the other grappled with more horrid violence. And all the time the thing was formless; in the dark, and even when at last early dawn glimmered at the uncurtained window, I knew not what my tormentor was like. The hours that the struggle had lasted seemed to me an eternity. Had it gone on longer my strength must utterly have failed. Once, I got breath to pray aloud. "Haste Thee to help me! O God, make haste." . . . And with the dawn I was alone!

"It" was gone; scattered like dust before the wind.

'And to this day I know not the shape of it. I know not if it were man, or beast, or spirit. I was so exhausted that I wanted some one to come to me. I thought I should faint. So I went out in the passage and called over the stairs. I thought some

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servant might hear and come. I knew this was possible, for I knew the size of the house. But the house was silent as the grave. Then I went back to my room and rang several times. No one stirred, no one came. Then I opened the window and tried to make some one outside hear. But the dreary street or road remained wide and empty and desolate; evidently no one awake or near. How intensely I longed for the blessed sound of some human voice no words could tell, but all was deathly silence. There were none to hear or heed me.' . . .

The breakfast hour was early in the chemist's establishment. Mr. Craig came down punctually and tried an impossibility. He tried to forget last night. His host said nothing; did not so much as hope he had slept well. There was little conversation of any sort during the meal. Mr. Craig longed to be out of the house that he might try to brush off the impression of the terror he had gone through. And as soon as without incivility he could take his leave he did; and his things were taken round to the station to await him there.

The meeting, to the immense audience present that day, was full of the deepest interest; and for the moment Mr. Craig forgot the appalling visitation of the night before. Luttrell was there, of course, and met him full of the warmth of old acquaintance, and of enthusiasm for the speakers and chief subjects of the meeting.

'Well, and how did you get on with Harrison? Are you going to stay the three nights there?'

'Oh, Harrison? He's all right; but I have to get home at once. I go to-day.' And then their talk passed on to other things, and there was no mention of the night's horror. That day Mr. Craig had left Liverpool for ever. Old Mrs. Erskine attended St. Andrew's Church as usual the next Sunday after the Vicar's return. Some of the congregation remarked that he did not look so well as before he went to Liverpool. Mrs. Erskine said 'the Vicar looked as if something had happened to him.' (It was some time after this that she drew from him the story of his night in that house in Liverpool.) St. Andrew's parish was a large one, and the church almost always full. The Vicar was much beloved. He was a great favourite with all classes. It was the general remark how even more than usually zealous and untiring he had become in following out his duties of serving his church and visiting his parishioners. He never seemed to take any rest, they said. And no matter how heavy the rain or how deep the snow, or how far off

he had to walk, his sick poor were regularly visited, and whatever comfort or consolation he could give were freely and wisely given. Yet there was something about him, a sort of silent quiet and absence of mind in his manner; besides the fact, which many observed, that now he was scarce ever seen to smile. This had never been his character in former years. Also the narrow world about him began to wonder that Mr. Craig's engagement to a young English lady, which at one time had been rather talked of, did not seem to come to pass.

It was about this time, perhaps three or four years after that meeting of the Church Congress at Liverpool, that Mrs. Erskine's kind heart felt she must try to have some private talk with her friend the Vicar, and find out if possible the secret trouble of his mind, hoping she might be allowed to share it with him, and so perhaps help to give him ease. She had not forgotten the ghostly episode at Liverpool, but she thought of it as a thing quite past and gone. So Mr. Craig was invited to tea at Woodside, Mrs. Erskine's pretty cottage by the river. It was a lovely July evening, one of those rare golden evenings which in Scotland seem more exquisite than anywhere else. The river flowed past with the music of scarce heard murmurings, past the heathery hill on the other side, that stood up veiled in purple gloom. So the two friends after tea went out and sat on the bench beside the white wall of the cottage overhung with honeysuckle, in the deep, red glow of sunset; and the gentle questionings of one were without much difficulty answered by the other.

'If you only knew—if anyone knew—they would only wonder that I am alive to tell it,' said the Vicar. 'You remember I told you what happened that awful night at that place. You, I know, thought that was all—you thought there was an end of the thing, when at dawn that morning the terror ceased. And oh! the joy of the return to my own fresh, cheerful home! A joy soon ended, for the very next week, one day in broad daylight, "It" met me again. Again that awful struggle and the fight for very life—the deadly grip—all over again. And then the utter exhaustion when at last "It" let go and left me. Thus it has been at times ever since. (What is that delicious scent? Is it the double stocks in your garden? or Sweet Sultan?) It reminds me: I forgot to tell you one thing. I never described to you the odour—the horrible *smell*—which is always the precursor of the "Thing's" arrival. You know what that means? No? If you ever had

read old books on Demonology you would know. And it has happened at intervals ever since.'

Mrs. Erskine listened and shuddered inwardly. She had always in her secret soul half believed in the explanation that her friend had had a particularly bad nightmare, or some horrid dream. She half thought it had not been anything really ghostly. But what could she think now? 'When had you the last encounter?' she asked as calmly as she could.

'Just a few days ago—on Friday last. "It" met me in broad daylight in the wood, that wood the other side the road near my house. I was going that way to call on the shepherd's wife who is so ill. The struggle was so fierce, the ghastly odour so overpowering, I hardly knew where I was when it was over. And all the time the beautiful trees all clothed with summer had stood around in perfect peace, and although I could see absolutely nothing I knew well enough that it was not *my* feet alone had trampled down the innocent grasses and ferns beside the footpath in that fearful hour. Those green trees saw; *they* know; they could tell you! Of course I had to walk home as best I could and pretend nothing had happened. I wish I needn't ever see a green tree again as long as I live!'

'Dear friend,' Mrs. Erskine said, 'I know you are nearer God than any of us. But tell me, do you *pray* for deliverance? I know you did that first time.'

Mr. Craig bowed his head, covering his face with his hands. Then he stood with his right hand stretched out and tightly clenched. Turning his face away, he spoke so low she could scarcely hear him. 'Mrs. Erskine—I *can't* pray—I curse—"It."'

Like a wise woman she said nothing—looked nothing. When she saw that strong man before her, white and shaken with emotion, she knew that words were vain.

On another occasion later on Mr. Craig was asked by his old friend whether he ever had any idea of any cause for the terror that haunted him. All he could say was to confess his own belief that the chemist and his family had been so intensely angered and irritated by the entire disagreement he had expressed that night at Liverpool while drawn into the discussion on spiritualism, that by some dreadful incantations they had summoned up the help of supernatural powers in order to punish him, and to prove in a way he was not likely to forget, that powers such as these did certainly exist. He knew he had never denied that, but he had

acknowledged the strongest doubts as to appearances said to be called up at *séances*, &c. He had even quoted the Chinese proverb, 'Reverence the spirits, but keep at a distance from them.' Finally, he said he firmly believed that some malignant spirit had answered the vindictive invitation of the united family in that house. There were times moreover when he believed it to be none else than the Spirit of Evil himself. There were moments when he could not imagine it to be anything else. A mischief so thorough might well be the Arch-Fiend's own work. For Mr. Craig's life was spoilt; that is, the life of his inner self. It seemed to him sometimes as if this inner life of his had been violently torn in half; as some blind, ruthless hand might tear up a fair sketch or painting just when perhaps it was nearest completion. The work could never more be pieced together again—it could never be finished. It was ruined. The cruelty was none of his, he knew that—but, anyhow, the thing was done.

Year after year had come and gone, and Mr. Craig was growing rather grey. One morning he saw the announcement of a death in an English newspaper that had been sent him the day before, but which he had been too busy to read. The paper fell from his hand; his face lit up for one instant with the light of some unutterable relief. He sat still for a long time, and then he got his hat and stick and with the paper in his pocket started for Woodside. It had never been his custom to go there before luncheon, and Mrs. Erskine was a little surprised to see him so early. She greeted him of course with her usual kindness. Without a word he took out the paper and pointed to a name in the column of deaths, and she read the name of 'I. Harrison, Chemist, North Road, Liverpool, suddenly,' &c.

The friends looked at each other, and I know the self-same light shone in the eyes of each.

'You think?' . . . she said.

'Yes,' he answered, 'I think with God's blessing it will be so.' . . . And then there was a pause and he rose to go.

'Don't be in such a hurry to be off. Do just tell me one little thing before you go,' she said. 'You will write to Hilda—after there has been time—to know?' But the Vicar had gone before there was time for reply.

There is little more to tell. From the date of that sudden death at Liverpool Mr. Craig was released for ever from the misery of years. Not only did the usual intervals pass and nothing happen,

but the oppression which had seemed to weigh down his life gradually vanished, and now he was even seen to smile, now and then.

And the perfumes of the flowers by the river in Mrs. Erskine's garden, and the green leaves in the wood, were to him now only as the memory of happy days.

And a new happiness, the joy of hope, was rising above the dark horizon of his life.

About this time Luttrell wrote from Liverpool: 'Have you heard of Harrison's death? I sent you the paper; thought you would like to see it. (I don't mean that of course!) There were some odd stories flying about. They said he had grown morose of late. And they were always having *séances* at his house, and odd things happened, and people didn't like it. It was very sudden: he was just found dead in his room upstairs. By the by, there's a rumour that you're engaged to that nice girl Hilda Hatton. Hope it's true, for I'm sure she'll make you a delightful wife, and you deserve that . . .'

Novels are usually supposed to wind up with a marriage. In the same way this short outline seems quite naturally to have grown to the same end. It was told me a great many years ago by the dear old lady, here named Mrs. Erskine. The tale (which is true in every point) appeared to me at the time most deeply interesting; especially as I knew Mr. Craig quite well and had sometimes attended his church. I remember how nervous the story made me feel in the dark for many a night after!

Soon after the time when Mrs. Erskine first recounted to me the strange episode in Mr. Craig's life, I left that part of Scotland where we so often met, and I have not since returned there. I never saw my old friend again; but I know that a year or so afterwards she slept in peace. And in a few more years the Vicar of St. Andrew's had also seen the Light of Paradise.

E. V. B.

BRITON AND BOER IN SOUTH AFRICA.

'FROM Africa there is always something new.' The truth of this time-honoured saying has never, perhaps, been more strikingly evidenced than at the present crisis in the affairs of the Southern part of that great continent. Who would have foretold that within six years after the conclusion of the bitterest and most protracted struggle that it has ever witnessed, the protagonists on both sides would be assembling in friendly conference to settle the conditions upon which the two rival white races are to live together in future, and would actually, by an unanimous vote, succeed in producing a draft Constitution, based on mutual concessions, for the consideration of the local Parliaments, and of His Majesty's Government? Yet such a kaleidoscopic change in South African feeling has actually taken place. Those who know will have discounted with a smile some of the earlier details of this historic fraternisation, due to the instinct for the picturesque inherent in modern journalism—the 'mixed bathing' at Durban, when Generals Botha and De Wet splashed Sir George Farrar and Sir Percy Fitzpatrick with childish glee, or the jovial picnics at Cape Town, when the ancient halls of Groot Constantia rang with perfervid protestations of general goodwill. When these minor reservations have been made, however, it is abundantly clear that for the first time on record a genuine *rapprochement*, born of the disinterested pursuit of a common aim, has been reached in the conference-chamber by the delegates of both nationalities, and those who never really trusted each other before have learnt in the higher and clearer atmosphere there engendered to bury the hatchet of discord and smoke the calumet of peace. As Mr. Abraham Fischer said in one of his speeches to the Legislative Assembly of the Orange River Colony, which was the first of the four States to adopt the Constitution.

The work certainly had not been easy, but there fortunately prevailed a great spirit of trust, and it was not necessary to be continually looking over one's shoulder [a true South African touch this!] to see that no advantage was being taken of one. . . . They had placed the interests of the whole country before them. They worked to reconcile the two races in South Africa, without whose

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reconciliation the country would never prosper. They did not say they had succeeded once and for all, but they held that the Convention had sown the seeds of harmony, and they hoped and believed that those seeds would grow in strength.

Mr. Hertzog, who has been regarded as a much more uncompromising exponent of anti-British ideas, was equally emphatic. 'To his joy,' he stated, 'not a single member of the Convention wished to be anything else than a South African. In many, whom he had regarded as against the Afrikaner people, he found a total change. No one seemed to be striving for one party or one colony, but for South Africa as a whole.' Speeches of a similar kind have been made by British as well as Dutch delegates in all the other Parliaments, and there is no doubt that they accurately reflect the tone of the discussions which took place both at Durban and at Cape Town.

Since then, a further meeting of the Convention has been held at Bloemfontein, for the purpose of discussing certain alterations in the draft Constitution proposed by the Cape Colony and Natal. It is understood that the situation was considerably strained over the crucial amendment put forward by the former Colony at the instigation of the Afrikaner Bond, which by stereotyping a 30 per cent. preference in voting power for rural (*i.e.* Dutch) over urban (*i.e.* English) constituencies, would have seriously impaired the principle of 'equal rights.' But thanks to Messrs. Botha and Smuts, the leading Dutch representatives from the Transvaal, who loyally supported Sir George Farrar and his Progressive colleagues, the dangerous corner was successfully turned. Save for the jettisoning of the scheme for proportional representation, so far as the elections to the House of Assembly are concerned (which, as the 'Times' truly says, will 'increase the representation of the least progressive element in all the colonies except Natal'), the Constitution emerged from its severest ordeal in South Africa practically intact. 'The discussions,' according to the venerable President of the Convention, Sir Henry de Villiers, 'were warm, but never bitter.' The 'Times' correspondent, as usual very well informed, summed up the position as follows :

Quite apart from the fact that the passage of the Act of Union through the Colonial Parliaments, which was a matter of considerable doubt before, is now practically assured, there has been a very obvious clearing of the air of dangerous delusions. The delegates all parted the best of friends, but without that blind confidence which was prevalent in February that union would mean a millennium of universal co-operation.

The Constitution has now been adopted by all the four colonies,¹ and there seems every prospect of its being shortly embodied in an Imperial Statute. Lord Selborne, who, ever since he became High Commissioner, has been, like his great predecessor, a consistent advocate of closer union, and whose famous memorandum in 1907 gave the movement a valuable stimulus, may well be delighted by the rapid realisation of his statesmanlike ideal.

The meeting of the Convention, then, and its unquestionable success, are important facts with which any writer on South African affairs nowadays must necessarily reckon. They cannot fail to colour the whole future history of the country, and to exert a marked influence for good upon the relations of those who live in it. This is neither the time, nor the place, to go back upon the 'old unhappy, far-off things' which have estranged those relations in the past, from the days of Slachter's Nek to those of the Jameson Raid, with manifold faults and misconceptions on both sides, as the two stubborn races which fate had made unwilling partners in South Africa worked out their individual destinies to the inevitable end. The die was cast by President Kruger's ultimatum to Queen Victoria in 1899, and the old bad era of suspicion and ill-will, we may well hope, came to a final close with the terms signed at Vereeniging in 1902. Nor need we dogmatise in these pages as to whether the great surgical operation of the war was, or was not, an essential preliminary—we believe it to have been so—to the present more healthy condition of the South African body politic. Still less is it profitable to debate, at this time of day, the wisdom of that big leap in the dark, heroic to some, to others quixotic, the grant of self-government, so soon after the termination of active hostilities, to the new subjects of King Edward. The *fait accompli* must be accepted, and we may well rejoice, not that things are no worse than they are, but that on the whole they are so surprisingly satisfactory.

Let us, however, clearly understand what has actually taken place. The Dutch fought in the war apparently for the continuance of the political subordination of the Uitlander in the Transvaal, but actually for the paramountcy of their own race throughout the sub-continent, the realisation of the 'Vereenigd Zuid Afrika' of their dreams, under the Vierkleur. The British fought primarily for the enfranchisement of the despised 'rooinek,' against which President Kruger, like Pharaoh of old, had short-

¹ By a parliamentary vote in the Cape Colony, Transvaal and Orange River Colony, and by a *referendum* (11,121 votes to 3,701) in Natal.

sightedly hardened his heart; but secondarily, as the long, stern struggle went on, to maintain and consolidate their own supremacy, under the Union Jack. The result, as things have turned out, is (in mathematical language) a diagonal of forces, a compromise between these two incompatible aims. The Dutch, when the new Constitution comes into being, will have gained their long-cherished object of a United South Africa, to be governed for some years to come largely in accordance with Dutch ideas, but under the British Crown and flag; the British have established, along with their flag, the authority of the Crown from Capetown to the Zambesi, and have incidentally affirmed the principle of equal rights for all white men before the law. In a word, Krugerism is dead and buried for ever in South Africa; but the maintenance of the British position, so hardly won, will depend, for the present at all events, upon the *bona fides* of the rugged old Dopper's more enlightened Dutch successors. We believe that the confidence felt in their good intentions is not misplaced; but in this case, as in so many others, deeds will speak louder than words.

Some disquieting signs there are, and it is useless to ignore them. The people of Natal, the most British of the South African colonies, have evidently felt some uneasiness as to their position under the proposed union, though the *referendum*, when taken, disclosed a very large majority for the constitution. For this uneasiness, such incidents as the dismissal of three British School Inspectors, who have all done admirable work for their department, in the Orange River Colony, following closely upon the final meeting of the Convention, are no doubt partly answerable. The process of getting rid of British officials, sometimes in wholesale fashion, as in the case of the South African Constabulary, sometimes by twos and threes, does not, indeed, appear to have been arrested, in spite of the fair speeches of the Dutch leaders which are not unnaturally accepted on this side of the water. A correspondent of the 'Standard' living in a country district of the Transvaal asserts that outside the charmed circle of the Rand, and to some extent of Pretoria, racial feeling is as bitter as, if not more bitter than, ever. 'The fact remains,' says this writer, 'that the idea exists in the minds of many Dutchmen that a United South Africa means a Dutch South Africa.' In support of his contention he gives a number of instances of the boycott applied to the British in his own neighbourhood, and of the strong feeling aroused on the language question. One of his stories is significant. 'We ought to have a new flag,' said a

Dutchman to an Englishman the other day, 'three parts Dutch and one part English; for this is a Dutch country.' 'What about the war? Wasn't the Transvaal conquered?' asked the Englishman.' 'Ah! my friend, *you and I will never agree about that*,' said the Dutchman, dismissing the subject.

The problem of the future development of South Africa, considered from the political or social standpoint, differs fundamentally from that of the working-out of British institutions in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In Canada, no doubt, the old French inhabitants possess many characteristics which resemble those of the Dutch; but they are practically restricted, an unassimilated entity, to a single province of the Dominion, and are thus 'kraaled' (to use an expressive South African term) by an overwhelming number of their British fellow-subjects. Moreover, they are too well aware of the advantages they enjoy in the matter of laws, language and religion, under their existing system of Government, to have any desire to exchange it for another. In Australia and New Zealand, no other white race than the British was ever in occupation; and in the former, even the native aborigines have long become a negligible quantity, while in the latter the once formidable Maoris have been peacefully absorbed into the constitution of the State. In South Africa, on the other hand, the Dutch are the toughest morsel that the British Empire, with its ostrich-like capacity for assimilating the most unpromising materials, has ever had to digest. They preceded us at the Cape as settlers by more than a century; and largely owing to the mistakes of British statesmen at home, they have, as the result of the 'Great Trek,' spread themselves throughout the length and breadth of the country, a considerable factor in the northern districts of Natal, balancing, if not overbalancing, the British in the Cape Colony and the Transvaal, and far outnumbering* them in the Orange River Colony, or as it is apparently once more to be called in future, somewhat illogically, the Orange Free State. In Rhodesia, alone, so far, they have not made any appreciable figure, at all events in local politics; though the late Mr. Rhodes, when he was anxious to enlist the support of the Afrikaner Bond for his large schemes in the northern territories, was by no means chary of his invitations to the Dutch to settle there, and a fair sprinkling of them have taken advantage of the opportunity of doing so. Whether Rhodesia

* The actual proportion of the Dutch and English in this colony is as near as possible 80 and 20 per cent.

is to remain, for some time to come, under the control of the Chartered Company, or to take its place before long in the new Union of South Africa, remains to be seen. But, sooner or later, it may be expected that the Dutch, who are born pioneers and have always cast longing eyes over the Limpopo, will trek northwards in increasing numbers. The Roman-Dutch law already prevails from Cape Colony to the Zambesi; and a Supreme Court to administer it will be established under the new Constitution, from which appeals will only be allowed in very special cases to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The Dutch language will also, according to the draft, 'possess and enjoy equal freedom, rights and privileges' with English throughout the area of the new South Africa, a momentous concession which is bound to carry with it consequences perhaps unforeseen by those who have granted it so cheerfully. Add to this the fact that, of the two races, the Dutch, who are for the most part dwellers in the country, and, like all country people, are accustomed to marry early, are unquestionably the more prolific. Families of from twelve to eighteen are common among them. Once again, it must not be forgotten that they are a remarkably homogeneous race, wherever they are found, acting together with extraordinary unanimity, and prone to yield an almost unquestioning obedience to their political superiors. The British, on the contrary, have carried with them to South Africa the seeds of those perennial divisions which separate them at home into Conservatives and Radicals, Imperialists and Little-Englanders; and thus never present an united front to the well-drilled battalions of Messrs. Botha, Fischer and Merriman. To this characteristic disunion, which some well-meaning folks hail as a sign of the decay of racialism, but others, no less worthy, deplore as being mere mugwumpery, was due the notoriously anti-British attitude of a considerable party of British descent in Cape Colony during the war; and to it may be ascribed also, in some measure, the present superiority at the polls of the Dutch in the Transvaal. In the Orange River Colony, outside of Bloemfontein and Harrismith, the British have been, since the recent change of Government, politically powerless.

This is the position to-day, but who shall say that it will be the position to-morrow? The mere fact of union (to quote once more the 'Standard's' correspondent) 'means material prosperity— increase of trade, a settled state of affairs, and an influx of European capital.' Further mineral discoveries, always possible in that land

of surprises, as well as the development of the deep level propositions on the Rand, will no doubt automatically attract British residents, and help to redress the balance of power. Similarly the adoption of the many well-considered projects of irrigation which are a legacy of Lord Milner¹ and the Crown Colony Governments, and would enable a denser population to be planted on hitherto sparsely occupied tracts of cultivable land, may, as time goes on, tend to the equalising of the two races, and prevent the undue stereotyping of Dutch influences in the central legislature and the provincial councils. Something, though unfortunately not very much, as he would be the first to admit, has already been done to strengthen the British element in the country, by the late High Commissioner's often ignorantly decried policy of land settlement, which has brought into the rural districts of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony some hundreds (or, counting women and children, some thousands) of British settlers. Scattered here and there, up and down the two colonies, they prosecute with much energy, and in the teeth of great difficulties, a more progressive type of farming among the huge undeveloped holdings of the Boers, who regard their go-ahead methods with mingled admiration and amusement. The position of the settlers in the Orange River Colony has recently been humorously set forth by one of their number in the following verses, dedicated 'without permission' to their guide, philosopher and friend, Major Apthorp, the moving spirit of the Land Board :

I'm a settler bold,
With sorrows untold ;
At present I'm worth scarce a copper :
What with locusts and grubs,
And other hard rubs,
I've come quite a terrible cropper.

The rent is too high !
Is our pitiful cry ;
Major A. we petition in vain :
He is weary of ' tick '
And gives some ' the kick,'
Who go off to Rhodesia by train.

The Major is good—
Be it so understood—
He has helped us most kindly of yore ;

But, like Oliver Twist,
We cannot resist
The temptation to ask him for more.

We don't want to quit,
We've got sinews and ' grit,'
We fear not hard labour and toil :
'Tis the ' rint ' that just kills us,
And makes us quite bilious,
Whilst ploughing Land Settlement soil.

Then, Major, ochone !
Pity poor Pat Malone—
Make the ' rint ' for the bhoys a bit aisy:
If ye'll only do this—
Pray don't take it amiss—
Sure we'll say you're a brick and a daisy !

¹ Lord Milner never ceased to advocate irrigation, and by the employment of Mr. (now Sir W.) Willcocks to report upon its possibilities, and of Mr. Strange,

More has resulted, perhaps, from Lord Milner's judicious encouragement of railway construction, which during the short interval that has elapsed since the war has more than doubled the pre-existing means of communication, covering the new colonies with a network of additional lines, and thus bringing town and country together to the lasting advantage of both, while opening up fresh fields of activity, not only for the present inhabitants, but for immigrants from over-sea. It may be hoped that with the disappearance of the spirit of Colonial individualism, which of late has obstructed such enterprises, more and yet more railways will be built. There is nothing like the 'iron horse' for the removal of ancient prejudices, and his popularity is now secured even in the most conservative quarters. In fact it is not too much to say that every Dutchman to-day would like to have a railway, not perhaps on his own farm, but on his next door neighbour's! Railways facilitate intercourse, too, between Boer husbandman and British shopkeeper—the isolated dweller on the lonely veld, who, as the old saying went, 'disliked to see the smoke of another man's chimney,' and the scarcely less self-centred owner of a store in the dead-alive up-country dorp. The friendly train carries the Dutchman's 'kinders' gratis to school, picking them up as its patient engine takes a drink at some wind-swept, sun-bitten crossing, and depositing them, a merry, shouting crowd, at the nearest convenient centre for their daily education on the same benches as the children of the British tradesman or operative. Or, again, it brings out to the wide, breezy spaces of the open country, to some homely red-brick habitation nestling under a kopje, where the buxom vrouw dispenses her coffee and cakes, while 'Oom Piet' or 'Oom Japie' smokes ruminatively upon the stoep, the Scotch bank manager or the English civil servant, who has been tempted from the town by the prospect of a day's sport with the spring-buck and the guinea-fowl.

Intermarriage, which has not been infrequent in the past, is likely, with the increasing opportunities for foregathering between town and country, to become even more common in the future. The cases in which a woman of British descent marries a Dutchman are comparatively rare, but the converse unions are by no means of unusual occurrence. These latter marriages, however, have not hitherto as a rule made for the furtherance of British ideas: in fact it has been observed that their offspring is often more Dutch

of the Indian Irrigation Department, to draw up schemes for the new colonies, paved the way for great extensions in this direction.

than British in its sympathies. The standard of living in such a *ménage* insensibly declines, becoming (to use no more invidious a term) somewhat primitive; the use of the 'taal' instead of English begins to be habitual. It was a subject of remark in the war how many burghers with British names there were among the commandos. We have ourselves known persons of British parentage on the father's side absolutely unable to utter a word of any language but Dutch. The spread of education, however, which has taken enormous strides during the last five or six years, and the improvement in the general level of civilisation which has accompanied it, will gradually, but inevitably, counteract these backward tendencies.

The Dutchman, if the politicians will but let him alone, is a decent, law-abiding fellow, whose interests are centred on his farm, and who likes (in the words of the prayer-book) to be 'godly and quietly governed' by his predikant and his landdrost. He is often a fine specimen of humanity, well over six feet in height and broad in proportion. A good rider and an excellent shot, he is the best of companions on a sporting expedition. He has many ancient virtues and few modern vices. He is 'given to hospitality' and (especially when he belongs to the older generation) displays a dignified and courteous bearing which contrasts favourably with the flippant cocksureness and self-assertion too often observable in the younger South African of either nationality. Having travelled extensively in the Dutch parts of the country we can truly say that only on one occasion have we met with incivility from an elderly Dutchman, and he was of German descent. His chief failings are a constitutional liability to 'inexactitude' in speech, partly attributable to a desire to stand well with his listener, and an overmastering dread of public opinion, which leads him to conceal his real views for fear of being called over the coals by his own people. He will apparently agree with everything that you put forward in a long conversation, but remains all the time wholly unconvinced by your arguments. His 'slimness' in business matters often disconcerts the new arrival in South Africa, who has been disarmed by his seeming frankness and *bonhomie*, and suddenly finds himself completely outwitted. And yet his *naïveté* is at times absolutely colossal. A good story was current some years ago in Cape Colony about a Dutchman who had the reputation of being very disaffected towards British rule. On one of the numerous tours which the present Governor has made, with such happy

results, in the outlying districts of the Colony, he happened to encounter this individual, with whom he chatted and shook hands in his usual friendly style. 'Before I met our Governor,' the Dutchman said next day, 'I was never loyal, but since I have seen him and shaken hands with him *I have been so loyal that I cannot sleep!*'

It is to be expected that as the causes of racial disagreement die away, the newspapers of South Africa, both Dutch and English, will moderate their tone. In the past, with some honourable exceptions, both have been too ready to accentuate the points of difference, and to give currency to statements reflecting on their opponents which were often unfair and untrue. It seemed never to have occurred to these partisan scribes to attribute to those who disagreed with them any but the worst motives for their actions, and the most opprobrious of epithets were bandied to and fro without the slightest regard for journalistic decency. Already a considerable improvement in this respect, we are glad to say, is becoming visible. There will still be extremists, of course, on both sides, who will do their best to keep the two races asunder, but such discreditable vapourings as those of a recent correspondent of a journal circulating in the west of the Transvaal will surely soon be a thing of the past. Referring to a memorial service held only a short time ago in the Potchefstroom cemetery, and the decoration of the graves of British soldiers and Boer women and children who died in the war, this irreconcilable scribe remarked, 'The spiritual leaders of the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches offered prayers, and the Minister of the "Hervormde" (*i.e.* Doppe) congregation joined in the service and pronounced the benediction. The British National Anthem concluded the ceremony, English and Dutch-speaking ladies and gentlemen taking part in an un-Afrikaner ceremony, and members of the Loyal Women's Guild all assembled to do honour to dead British soldiers and Afrikaner women and children, whose spirits were entertained with the aforesaid anthem. One idea, one adoration, the use of one language (English)! It gave one's heart pain and brought a bad taste into one's mouth. Must the weaker nation be thus absorbed by the stronger? Is this the beginning of the end of the sturdy Boer race, which by excessive conciliation is being absorbed by the British?' But these are only the impotent and despairing cries of those who are beginning to realise that the game of racialism is up.

Not that it is to be supposed that Boer and Briton in South

Africa will incontinently fall into each other's arms because the politicians have succeeded in framing a Constitution. The rivalry between the two races is too inveterate and too acute to be brought to an end in a moment by the mere pronouncing of the shibboleth of Union. But if they are allowed to work out their own salvation in their own way—and one of the most satisfactory features of the present situation is that South African questions can no longer be the shuttlecock of British parties in the House of Commons—there is no reason why, like their leaders, they should not come to a better understanding, and, as in the scene of the Potchefstroom cemetery depicted above, shake hands over the grave of an ill-starred but not inglorious past.

A CAPE M.A.

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THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

SHE is eighty years old and upwards, but she looks a fresh sixty ; and, if you are fortunate enough to be of her inner friendship, you will find that she has the heart of a young woman—of a very exceptional young woman. If you, being some thirty or forty or fifty years her junior, speak to her out of the depths of your heart, she will answer you—deep answering deep. She is rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed, silver-haired ; and she has the erect carriage of a young woman. If she was a queen or a duchess you would say to yourself that blood tells. Few queens and few duchesses, one is tolerably sure, can have had her graciousness and sweetness. In my own experience I have known nothing like her, young nor old, and one says of her with the old poet :

I think Nature has lost the mould
Where she her shape did take.

Perhaps one understands better how she comes to be what she is, having heard that she may claim kin with one of the noblest of the Elizabethans, whose name was once hers. ‘You meaner beauties of the night,’ one murmurs, seeing her graciousness and remembering one of the most exquisite tributes ever paid to a woman, and paid by him of whom she was namesake.

You see her in her beautiful old house, coloured by the centuries, its long, low, kindly front bending a little, as though the hand of Time leaning upon it lightly constrained it, and it makes her a lovely background. Four hundred years it has stood in sun and shade behind its railings of beautiful floriated ironwork, sheltered by its row of giant elms. The garden is dim and rich, with little heart-shaped and diamond-shaped beds cut in the greensward. Its mulberry trees, hollow at the heart and supported by clamped iron bands, drop their luscious crimson fruits year after year in a great profusion. In spring there are hedges of rhododendron, the first of the kind to be grown in England, planted here by a traveller who carried the seed or the plant from China some hundred and fifty years ago. The mauve bloom is a beautiful thing to see. The quiet old gables of the house stand up beyond the roses and

lilies and the dim ordered richness of the garden, as beautiful in old age as its mistress. The old garden and the old house with the dim, beautiful rooms make a lovely setting for her. When she receives you there you are aware of what a great influence manners may be in the history of the world and peoples. More than beauty, rank, wealth, power, intellect, manners makyth man. Manners make a golden cloak and a golden atmosphere which, more than any other of the gifts and graces, win homage and love.

If I were asked to define her predominant quality I should put it as a passionate kindness, if it be not amiss to speak of passion in conjunction with that lovely placidity of age which has nothing of decay about it. But the kindness is so intense as to suggest a white flame. The word 'kind' is for ever on her lips, and gains a new beauty in her speaking of it. 'You are so *kind*,' she says, from whom all kindness proceeds; and there is hardly anyone or anything outside her kindness.

One likes to think of the many years during which her kindness has been a shield and a protection to many; to the lower creation as well as to humanity. Almost the first thing I heard of her, before her light had shone on myself, was from the driver of a station-fly. There are hills in our beautiful country, straight up and down hills like the walls of a house, making beautiful valleys, but cruelly hard on the horses. A nervous horse has been known many times to refuse the perpendicular ascent. About Bank Holiday time you shall see it scaled by a lean horse with a cargo of Londoners behind—six or eight men it may be, with perhaps a sprinkling of women and children—which sets you to thinking on a new Dante's Circle, where presumably one man shall draw six or eight horses. 'Bless yer 'eart,' says the flyman, 'they don't care. An 'oss is an 'oss to them! *They* don't light down at no 'ills.'

'*Tell them,*' says she, '*that the Lady of the Manor always walks up.*'

She always does walk up, despite her more than eighty years and a weakness of her dear old heart, which has felt so much and loved so much in those eighty years that it must needs be a little tired.

'*Tell them that the Lady of the Manor always walks up.*'

How delicious it is in its appeal to human weakness! One can imagine some of the Londoners, overawed by the high-sounding title, getting down at the hill's foot and walking up. And

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there is hardly a creature in the country who will go up the worst hills behind the horses seeing that the Lady of the Manor always walks up !

There is a certain book called 'Black Beauty' which inculcates, most successfully, I am told, the duty of kindness to horses. She has deposited the book in many hundreds of London cabs. Someone had a humorous vision of hundreds of cabmen arriving at Scotland Yard with hundreds of copies of 'Black Beauty,' found in their cabs, to be restored to the rightful owners.

Once she found a poor dog, in blazing sunshine, tied to a stake in the middle of a field, without shelter, without water, and untied him, and bathed his poor head, and took him away with her. I should like to have heard what she said to the human being responsible—and I wonder if he was her tenant—for her wrath could be magnificent.

And this brings me to the dominance without which her sweetness would be less than queenly. She has been a widow for several years, and since she is sonless, and, alas ! childless, she has to be king and queen as well. She has much property and many manorial rights ; and to some people it may have seemed easy enough to wrest this or that concession from a woman. But she has held her rights, the rights of those who are to come after her, like a queen. I should not care to be the man who dared to flout her.

She prefers to be the mother rather than the queen, and her motherliness leans over all those who come to dwell in her precincts. I think she could not bear anyone to be sick or sorry or neglected or solitary if her motherliness could reach them, which makes it a singularly sociable country and a more than usually kindly one. She gives the example of a great charity. You could not well displease her more than by an unkindness or an uncharitable speech. I have heard of such being made at her table, and of the deft way she rebuked it by a gentle praise of the one belittled.

Her motherhood is over the place as well as the people. In the next village, where she is not, there is no such amity as prevails under her sway, though she is also Lady of its manor, and there is still the garden of her Manor House, where Cardinal Wolsey walked of a Shakespearean day. The loveliest common in England stretches before her door. It is soft as velvet under the foot. In May it is a golden common for the gorse, and smells like all nutty

essences drenched in honey. A little later there will be green seas of bracken. In autumn, before the bracken turns, there are sheets of purple ling. There are great stretches of the bracken and the gorse and the ling, through which are many paths and here and there an historic tree. There is the tree under which Richard Crookback sat his horse while he cursed the women of the village who had mocked at his hump, decreeing for their punishment that no woman should inherit from her husband; which law survives to this day, for all a man has goes to his son or to his nearest male relative. I found a philosophic tramp there one day last autumn, lying on a purple bed fit for a king, who remarked to me that he didn't want no 'ouses so long as the fine weather stayed, and when it went there was the 'Ouse.

You may lose yourself among the gorse paths and find yourself again by the landmark of the two tall Scotch firs which are called the Sisters. Or you may come out presently among the magnificent trees, for this is the county of trees. The pines smell wonderfully in the hot sun, and the deciduous forest trees make lovely vistas and arcades. One is reminded of the ages of faith in the naming of the Mounts, the little hillocks on which are grouped six or eight pine trees. They are only mounts to-day, but one suspects that they were once the Mount of Olives and the Mount of Calvary. Round the Fish Pond stand grouped the Twelve Apostles, twelve splendid beeches, or at least eleven and a younger one planted there to fill the gap made by some winter storm. Lovely are the pond and the Twelve Apostles, whether in the greenery of spring, the dark splendour of summer, the scarlet and orange of autumn, or the crowning loveliness of the bare boughs, and like what one dreams of Fairyland. The place is always quite solitary, except it might be for a village child, or, in these days of summer, a nurse and her charges sitting under a tree. No wonder she who is Queen of the Common loves it like a living thing.

And that reminds me of an odd thing. The pond, guarded by the Twelve Apostles, is a great breeding-place for frogs. When they have passed the tadpole stage and the heat of summer begins to dry the pond, making the position somewhat congested, the frogs leave the pond, and, hopping across the common, travel by way of the Manor House and its garden to the river, some three miles away. Or at least it is said that they go to the river. No one has followed them beyond the Manor House garden to see. But it is certain that a long procession of them passes in at the

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Manor House hall-door, which stands open pretty well all the year round, and out at the garden door which gives you a lovely vista as you stand outside gazing on green retreats, 'a deare secret greenesse.'

There is a day in autumn, just about the time it begins to be a little mournful and the country needs something to cheer it, when the Hunt meets on the common. It is a gay and cheerful scene—horses and hounds, and the scarlet-coated hunting men, and the huntsman and the whipper-in, and the people who come to look on in carriages or afoot. It is all grouped about the Manor House gates; and the scene brings a strange delight and exhilaration with it. Then, as at a signal, though I saw none, the beautiful iron gates open and the most beautiful old lady in the world comes out and speaks graciously to this one and that one; and refreshments are carried round, and, these partaken of, the business of the day begins.

She is lavishly hospitable and entertains all the year round. Beautiful it is to see her wait on her guests; and I confess I was rather scandalised at first to see her carry chairs and find places. Later I understood that it was her will, and none thinks of disputing her will. She is an exquisite hostess. Not the lowliest nor the least is overlooked or forgotten. Whether her hospitality is official or personal it is the same; whether she waits on the Brigade boys, to whom she gives a tea on the common, or on special, honoured guests of her own, it is always the same.

It seems a sacrilege to think of age in her connexion. She does not think of it herself, although she has been known to speak of 'a chit of thirty.' She postpones the day of wearing glasses, 'not liking to begin too soon,' and she has been known to ascribe to influenza the cessation of her walking powers. She keeps old age at bay by her great heart and courage, and also by her trust of the elements, which are kindly to those who trust them. Younger women grumble at the tenuity of the rug with which she and they protect their knees against a winter blast when she drives in her open carriage, as she will nearly every day of the year. You meet her driving fifteen miles in an open carriage in such a North-easter as makes a younger person cling to the shelter of the hedge; nor will she look pinched and miserable as her younger companion very likely will. No, indeed; the wind will have only set fresh roses in her beautiful old face.

She is almost old-fashionedly feminine so far as her own tastes

are regarded, though she is so great minded and hearted that she will have tolerance even for a Suffragist. Yet she is very masculine. She is, in fact, that blend of the man and the woman which makes up the fine flower of human nature. She is in a manner of speaking full-blooded. A staunch Churchwoman, a sound Tory, she would have little sympathy with the thin-blooded virtues which one associates somehow with Radicalism and the Nonconformist conscience. She likes people to enjoy their wine, for instance, and would think it unworthy of a gentleman to be a total abstainer. The punch given at her annual tenants' dinner, brewed after a famous recipe, is a drink for giants and fighting men. She loves sport—indeed, she hunted till she was sixty and sat out the last Eton and Harrow match in floods of rain. She was only afraid her visitors might think the weather prohibitive; and that was a shrewd and kindly one who, watching the disappointment of her face while the morning hours darkened, said cheerfully at last, as one might to an expectant child: 'Well, never mind, let us go all the same.' And go she did, and missed no point of the play despite the downpour.

To be sure she is little more than a girl by the old cricketer who is her near neighbour, who played his first match for Harrow in '32, and captained Harrow against Eton in '36, and has never missed a match since. He resents not being invited even to late Bridge parties with supper to follow. 'I mightn't go,' he says, 'but I like to be asked.' They were certainly giants in those days, and our age seems sadly puny by comparison.

She has that quality without which no human being, whatever his or her gifts, is complete—the delightful sense of humour. She has a fresh, overflowing sense of humour, and she has a charming wit. There is positive genius in her capacity for saying the right thing. To the parents of a small boy who had made his third run-away from school she, with her dear old hand on theirs, said: 'My dears, but how *very* flattering!' What a contrast to the excellent *bourgeoisie* who, to a man, or a woman, suggested the stick! Fortunately the *bourgeoisie* have not often fine and delicate stuff to handle. The same little runaway, having had a stand-up fight with a boy, younger, indeed, than himself, but of quite abnormal weight and height, because of the young giant's good-natured but somewhat dangerous gambols with the small girls—you could as well imagine a steam-roller gambolling—was

pitched into all round because the fight had taken place on a festive occasion, and had only not been serious since the grown-ups had separated the combatants. Said the youngest old lady in the world to the smaller combatant :

‘ Was it a good fight ? And *what* a pity it wasn’t fought out ! For the honour of our village I should have liked my boy to win.’

There would be small sympathy there with Disarmament or the Peace Society, any more than with Vegetarianism, or Total Abstinence, or any other fad.

She is devoted to children and waits on them hand and foot. There is one child whom she sometimes has to lunch, who, being an only child, lives in a world of imaginary persons. There is the Prince. Of course, when Ruth comes to lunch the Prince also is invited. He is visible only to Ruth and his hostess ; but of course he must be there, for his place is set and his plate is put before him ; and even though the food does not seem to disappear, princes, especially fairy princes, have sometimes delicate appetites, you know. After the lunch the most gracious hostess in the world has been known to dance with the Prince, setting to partners charmingly and doing everything a small imperious child suggests as though she were not the Queen ; and a Fairy Queen and a Fairy Godmother at that.

She never misses a joke, and her laughter is fresher than a girl’s. She has been known to rush into a dread silence at a dull dinner-table with a joke which, she confessed ruefully, was misunderstood after all. To be sure it was misunderstood. Good commonplace people could not be expected to understand a jest on the lips of eighty, nor to see how beautiful a thing it is when the spirit asserts its everlasting youth, laughing in the grim faces of the years.

By the way, when I talked of children I should have mentioned the child of the house, the little gentle spirit which seems somehow to keep it in innocent guardianship. Her portrait hangs in the dim, rich, sweetly scented drawing-room, a little stiff figure swathed in white satin, with more than a suspicion of stays. Little Mary M., the only child born in the Manor House for two hundred years, lies buried, side by side with a Crusader and his wife, in the church of the neighbouring village. She was five years old when she died ; and when I look at her I think of Evelyn’s son, ‘ that pretty person,’ who died also at five, pressed down by a premature weight of learning. Also I think of the lovely epitaph on a child at Reigate

Churchyard, which somehow I associate with Mary M. in her white satin gown :

In quiete sleepe here lies the dear remayne
Of a sweet Babe her father's joye and payne.
A pretty Infant, loved and lovyng, she
Was Bewtys abstract, Love's epitome.
A Lyttle Volvme but divine, whearein
Were seen both Paradise and Chervbin.
While she lived heare wh^{ch} was bvt lyttle space
A few shorte yeares Earth had a heavenly face.
And dead she lookt a lovelye piece of claye
After her shynge soule was fled awaye.
Reader, had'st thou her dissolution seene
Thou would'st have wept had'st thou this marble beene.

Mary M. and the wonderful old Lady of the House. They seem to me intimately wrought with the atmosphere of the house and a part of its fabric, and I cannot think of it without the one and the other.

I have said of her that some great hand should have limned her. She ought to stand in literature as certain beautiful old ladies stand in art ; as, in our own days, Whistler's portrait of his mother and Sargent's portrait of Miss Octavia Hill. No writer and no painter could have a more delightful subject. A great poet or painter might have done justice to her infinite variety. None knows better than myself the inadequacy of my poor treatment. But I am glad that a good Fate and a good Fortune led me to know her.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

BABIES OF THE STATE.

WITHOUT organisation and without combination a widespread and effective strike has been slowly taking place—the strike of the middle and upper-middle class women against motherhood.

Month by month short paragraphs can be seen in the newspapers chronicling in stern figures the stern facts of the decrease of the birth rate. At the same time the marriage rate increases, and the physical facts of human nature do not change. The conclusion is, therefore, inevitable that the wives have struck against what used to be considered the necessary corollary of wifehood—motherhood.

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE is not the place to discuss either the physics or the ethics of this subject, but it is the place to suggest thoughts on the national and patriotic aspects of this regrettable fact.

The nation demands that its population should be kept up to the standard of its requirements; the classes which, for want of a better term, might be called 'educated' are refusing adequately to meet the need; the classes whose want of knowledge forbids them to strike, or whose lack of imagination prevents their realising the pains, responsibilities, and penalties of family duties, still obey brute nature and fling their unwanted children on to the earth. 'Horrible!' we either think or say, and inclination bids us turn from the subject and think of something pleasanter. But two considerations bring us sharply back to the point: first, that the nation, and all that it stands for, needs the young lives; and, secondly, that the babies, with their tiny clinging fingers, their soft, velvety skins, their cooey sounds and witchful gestures, are guileless of the mixed and often unholy motives of their creation. They are on this wonderful world without choice, bundles of potentialities awaiting adult human action to be developed or stunted.

How does the nation which wants the children treat them? The annals of the police courts, the experience of the attendance officers of the London County Council, the reports of the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the stories of the vast young army in truant or industrial schools, the tales of the Waifs

and Strays Society and Dr. Barnardo's organisation are hideously eloquent of the cruelty, the neglect, and the criminality of thousands of parents. For their action the State can hardly be held directly responsible (a price has to be paid for liberty), but for the care of the children whose misfortunes have brought them to be supported by the State the nation is wholly responsible. Their weal or woe is the business of every man or woman who reads these pages. To ascertain the facts concerning their lives every taxpayer has dipped into his pocket to meet the many thousands of pounds which the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws has cost, and yet the complication of the problem and the weight of the Blue-books are to most people prohibitive, and few have read them. Even the thoughtful often say: 'I have got the Reports, and hope to tackle them some day, but—,' and then follow apologies for their neglect owing to their size, the magnitude of the subject, or the pressure of other duties or pleasures. Meanwhile the children! The children are growing up, or are dying. The children, already handicapped by their parentage, are further handicapped by the conditions under which the State is rearing them. The children, which the nation needs—the very life-blood of her existence, for which she is paying, are still left under conditions which for decades have been condemned by philanthropists and educationists, as well as by the Poor Law Inspectors themselves.

On January 1, 1908, according to the Local Government Board return: 234,792 children were dependent on the State, either wholly or partially. Of these

22,483 were in workhouses and workhouse infirmaries;

11,602 in district and separate, often called 'barrack,' schools;

17,090 in village communities, scattered, receiving, and other guardians' homes;

11,251 in institutions other than those mentioned above;

8,565 boarded out in families of the industrial classes; and
163,801 receiving relief while still remaining with their parents.

It is a portentous array, of nearly a quarter of a million of children, and each has an individual character.

Pageants are now the fashion. Let us stand on one side of the stage (as did Stow, the historian, in the Stepney children's pageant) and pass the verdict of the onlooker, as, primed with the figures and facts vouched for by the Royal Commissioners, we see the children of the State exhibit themselves in evidence of the care of their guardians.

First the babies. Here they come, thousands of them, some born in the workhouse, tiny, pink crumpled-skinned mites of a few days old ; others toddles of under three, who have never known another home.

‘What a nice woman in the nurse’s cap and apron ! I would trust her with any child. The head official, I suppose. But her under staff ! What a terrible set ! Those old women look idiotic and the young ones wicked. The inmates told off to serve in the nurseries you say they are ! Surely no one with common humanity or sense would put a baby who requires wise observation under such women !’

‘Alas ! but the guardians do.’

The Report states :

The whole nursery has often been found under the charge of a person actually certified as of unsound mind, the bottles sour, the babies wet, cold, and dirty. The Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded draws attention to an episode in connection with one feeble-minded woman who was set to wash a baby ; she did so in boiling water, and it died.

But this is no new discovery made by the recent Royal Commission. In 1897 Dr. Fuller, the Medical Inspector, reported to the Local Government Board that

in sixty-four workhouses imbeciles or weak-minded women are entrusted with the care of infants, as helps to the able-bodied or inferior women who are placed in charge by the matron, without the constant supervision of a responsible officer.

‘We recognise,’ acknowledges the Report of the Royal Commissioners, ‘that some improvement has since taken place ; but, as we have ourselves seen, pauper inmates, many of them feeble-minded, are still almost everywhere utilised for handling the babies. . . . As things are, the visitor to a workhouse nursery finds it too often a place of intolerable stench, under quite insufficient supervision, in which it would be a miracle if the babies continued in health.’

‘How thin and pale and undersized many of them are ! Surely they are properly fed and clothed and exercised !’

‘In one large workhouse,’ writes the Commissioners, ‘it was noticed that from perhaps about eighteen months to two and a half years of age the children had a sickly appearance. They were having their dinner, which consisted of large platefuls of potatoes and minced beef—a somewhat improper diet for children of that age.’ ‘Even so elementary a requirement as suitable clothing is

neglected.' 'The infants,' states a lady guardian, 'have not always a proper supply of flannel, and their shirts are sometimes made of rough unbleached calico.' 'Babies of twelve months or thereabouts have their feet compressed into tight laced-up boots over thick socks doubled under their feet to make them fit into the boots.' 'In some workhouses the children have no toys, in others the toys remain tidily on a shelf out of reach so that there may be no litter on the floor.'

In another extensive workhouse it was found that the babies of one or two years of age were preparing for their afternoon sleep. They were seated in rows on wooden benches in front of a wooden table. On the table was a long narrow cushion, and when the babies were sufficiently exhausted they fell forward upon this to sleep! The position seemed most uncomfortable and likely to be injurious.

In another place it was stated

That the infants weaned, but unable to feed themselves, are sometimes placed in a row and the whole row fed with one spoon . . . from one plate of rice pudding. The spoon went in and out of the mouths all along the row.

'We were shocked,' continues the Report, 'to discover that the infants in the nursery of the great palatial establishments in London and other large towns *seldom or never got into the open air.*'

We found the nursery frequently on the third or fourth storey of a gigantic block often without balconies, whence the only means of access even to the workhouse yard was a flight of stone steps down which it was impossible to wheel a baby carriage of any kind. There was no staff of nurses adequate to carrying fifty or sixty infants out for an airing. In some of these workhouses it was frankly admitted that these babies never left their own quarters (and the stench that we have described), and never got into the open air during the whole period of their residence in the workhouse nursery.

In short, 'we regret to report,' say the Commissioners, 'that these workhouse nurseries are, in a large number of cases, alike in structural arrangements, equipment, organisation, and staffing, wholly unsuited to the healthy rearing of infants.'

'See, here come the coffins!'

Coffins—tiny wooden boxes—of just cheap deal; some with a wreath of flowers, and followed by a weeping woman; others just conveyed by officials—unwanted, unregretted babies.

As far as one's eye can reach they come. Coffins and coffins, and still more coffins; almost as many coffins as there were babies.

'Not quite. The Report repeats the evidence of the Medical

Inspector of the Local Government Board for Poor-Law purposes, who some years ago made a careful inquiry and found that one baby out of every three died annually. "A long time ago," did I hear you murmur, "and things are better now"?'

'Would that it were so, but a more recent inquiry made by the Commissioners shows that out of every thousand children born in the Poor-Law institutions forty to forty-five die within a week, and out of 8483 infants who were born during 1907 in the workhouses of the 450 Unions inquired into, no fewer than 1050 (or 13 per cent.) actually died on the premises before attaining one year.' 'The infantile mortality in the population as a whole,' write the authors of the Minority Report, 'exposed to all dangers of inadequate medical attendance and nursing, lack of sufficient food, warmth, and care, and parental ignorance and neglect, is admittedly excessive. The corresponding mortality among the infants in the Poor-Law institutions, where all these dangers may be supposed to be absent, is between two and three times as great.'

'It must be the fault of the system, it is often said, that children, like chickens, cannot for long be safely aggregated together.'

'It is difficult to say whether it is the system or the administration which is most to blame, but the facts are incontrovertible. In some workhouses 40 per cent. of the babies die within the year. In ten others 493 babies were born, and only fourteen, or 3 per cent., perished before they had lived through four seasons. In ten other workhouses 333 infants saw the light, and through the gates 114 coffins were borne, or 33 per cent. of the whole.'

This variation would appear to point to faults of administration. On the other hand, the system is contrary to nature; for the natural law limits families to a few children, and usually provides that King Baby should rule as sole monarch for eighteen months or two years. On this the Report says:

It has been suggested to us by persons experienced in the peculiar dangers of institutions for infants of tender years, that the high death rate, especially the excessive death rates after the first few weeks of life, right up to the age of three or four, may be due to some adverse influence steadily increasing in its deleterious effect the longer the child is exposed to it. In the scarlet fever wards of isolation hospitals it has been suggested that the mere aggregation of cases may possibly produce, unless there are the most elaborate measures for disinfection, a dangerous 'intensification' of the disease. In the workhouse nursery there is practically no periodical disinfection. The walls, the floors, the furniture, must all become, year after year, more impregnated with whatever mephitic atmosphere prevails. The very cots in which the infants lie have been previously tenanted by an incalculable succession of infants in all states of health and morbidity.

'Is the long undertaker's bill to be deplored, considering the parentage of this class of children and the way the guardians rear them?'

The nation wants the babies; indeed, to maintain its position it must have them, and 'the tendency of nature is to return to the normal'—a scientific fact of profound civic importance. Besides, the Report says:

We find that it is generally assumed that the women admitted to the workhouse for lying-in are either feeble-minded girls, persistently immoral women, or wives deserted by their husbands. Whatever may have been the case in past years, this is no longer a correct description of the patients in what have become, in effect, maternity hospitals. Out of all the women who gave birth to children in the Poor-Law institutions of England and Wales during 1907, it appears that about 30 per cent. were married women. In the Poor-Law institutions of London and some other towns the proportion of married women rises to 40 and even to 50 per cent.

As to how the guardians rear the babies that is another matter. But let us leave institutions with the high walls, the monotony which stifles, the organisation which paralyses energy, the control which alike saps freedom and initiation, and the unfailing provision of food no one visibly earns, so that we may go and visit some of the homes which the guardians subsidise, and where they keep, or partially keep, out of the ratepayers' pockets 163,801 children.

I.—A clean home this, mother out at work, earning 4s. 6d. by charing; the guardians giving 7s. 6d. Four children, (13, 9, 6, 4), left to themselves while she is out, but evidently fond of home and each other. A small kitchen garden which would abundantly pay for care, but fatigue compels its neglect. No meat is included in her budget, and but 3d. a week for milk; but 12s. a week, and 4s. 6d. of it depending on her never ailing and her employers always requiring her, is hardly adequate on which to pay rent and keep five people, providing the children with their sole items of life's capital—health, height, and strength.

II.—A dirty home this, in a filthy court. The mother is out; the children playing among the street garbage. Their clothes are ragged, their heads verminous, their poor faces sharp with that expression which always wanting and never being satisfied stamps indelibly on the human countenance. One bed and a mattress pulled on to the floor is all that is provided for the restful sleep of six people; and 3s. a week is what a pitiful public subscribes *viâ* the rates to show its appreciation of such a home life. Waste and

worse. The Majority Report quotes with approval the words of Dr. McVail : ' In many cases the amount allowed by the guardians for the maintenance of outdoor pauper children cannot possibly suffice to keep them even moderately well.' This could be applied to Case I. ' Many mothers having to earn their living . . . cannot attend to their children at home, so that there is no proper cooking, the house is untidy and uncomfortable, and the living rooms and bedrooms unventilated and dirty.' This could be applied to Case II.

III.—A disgraceful home this, best perhaps described in the words of the Majority Report :

A widow with three children, a well-known drunken character, was relieved with 3s., one of her children earning 7s., making a total of 10s. It was urged by the relieving officer that it was no case for out-relief as it was encouraging drunkenness and immorality. . . . It was held that the relief having been suspended for a month, she had suffered sufficient punishment. The officer said : ' She still drinks,' and that 4s. relief was given on December 13, ' to tide her over the holidays.' She had been before the police for drunkenness. It was considered (by the guardians) to meet the disqualification of the case by reducing the relief to 3s. instead of 4s.

IV.—An immoral home this, again best described in official words :

I saw in one instance out-relief children habitually sent out to pilfer in a small way, others to beg, some whose mothers were drunkards or living immoral lives. . . . These definitely bad mothers were but a small minority of the mothers whom we visited, but there were many of a negatively bad type, people without standard, whining, colourless people, often with poor health. If out-relief is given at all . . . those who give it must take the responsibility for its right use.

V.—A good home this. Mother a seamstress, earning about 9s. a week, and the board of guardians granting another 6s. Four children (11, 9, 6, and 2) made happy by the motherly love of a steady, methodical, and careful woman, who, however, cannot support them except by living without amusement and working unceasingly, as well as by getting charitable help towards their clothes from the Church, country holidays from the Children's Country Holiday Fund, official help in dinners from the Educational Authority, and medical help from the health visitor or nurse engaged by the Town Council. What a confusion of sources, what want of inquiry, what danger of overlapping ; five organisations to aid the same family, three of them State supplied, two supported by religious or philanthropic persons. On this confusion, which is

not only extravagant to the ratepayers, but corrupting to the character of the recipients, the Minority Report lays great stress.

In 1898, when Lord Peel was the Chairman of the State Children's Association, its executive Committee brought out a chart which showed that there were nationally supported children under the Local Government Board, under the Home Office, under the Education Department, under the Metropolitan Asylums Board, under the Lunacy Commissioners, each using its own administrative organisation. At that time the same children were being dealt with by what may be called rival authorities, without any machinery for co-operation or opportunities of interchange of knowledge or experience. Since then there has been but little change, and the Reports point out forcibly the existence of the same conditions only worse, inasmuch as more parents now seek free food and other assistance for their children from official hands.

Face to face with such a serious confusion of evils, affecting as they do the character of the people—the very foundation of our national greatness; confronted with the complicated problem how to simplify machinery which has been growing for years, and is further entangled with the undergrowth of vast numbers of officials and their vested interests; distressed on the one hand by the clamour of that section of society who think that everything should be done by the State, and on the other by the insistent demand of those who see the incalculable good which springs from volunteer effort or agencies, the bewildered statesman might be sympathised with, if not excused, if he did feel inclined to agree with Mr. John Burns' suggestion, and leave it all to him.

'I care for the people,' in effect he said, 'I know their needs. I have the officials to do the work. I am the President of the Local Government Board. Be easy, leave it all to me, I will report to the House once in three months. All will be well.'

It sounds a simple plan, but, before it can be even seriously advocated, it would be as well to survey the recent history of the Local Government Board, and see if, even under this President, its past record gives hope for future effective achievement. Once more let us begin with—

(a) *The Babies*.—Sir John Simon, Chief Medical Officer of the Local Government Board, wrote forcibly on the subject more than a generation past. Dr. Fuller's Report was made years ago. Again and again reform has been urged by Poor Law Inspectors and

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workhouse officials, who have asked for additional powers to obtain information or classification or detention. What has the Local Government Board done? The following extract from the Minority Report can be the reply:

Alike in the prevention of the continued procreation of the feeble-minded, in the rescue of girl-mothers from a life of sexual immorality, and in the reduction of infantile mortality in respectable but necessitous families, the destitution authorities, in spite of their great expenditure, are to-day effecting no useful results. With regard to the two first of these problems, at any rate, the activities of the boards of guardians are, in our judgment, actually intensifying the evil. If the State had desired to maximise both feeble-minded procreation, and birth out of wedlock, there could not have been suggested a more apt device than the provision, throughout the country, of general mixed workhouses, organised as they are now to serve as unconditional maternity hospitals. . . . While thus encouraging . . . these evils they are doing little to arrest the appalling preventible mortality that prevails among the infants of the poor.

(b) *The Children in the Workhouses.*—‘So long ago as 1841 the Poor-Law Commissioners pointed out forcibly the evils connected with the maintenance of children in workhouses.’ In 1896 the Departmental Committee of which Mr. Mundella was chairman, and on which I had the honour of sitting, brought before the public the opinion of inspectors, guardians, officials, educationists and child-lovers, all unanimous in condemning this system. ‘In the workhouse the children meet with crime and pauperism from day to day.’ ‘They are in the hands of adult paupers for their cleanliness, and the whole thing is extremely bad.’ ‘The able-bodied paupers with whom they associate are a very bad class, almost verging on criminal, if not quite,’ is some of the evidence quoted in the Report, and the Committee unanimously signed the recommendation ‘that no children be allowed to enter the workhouse,’ and now, thirteen years afterwards, the same conditions prevail. The Majority Report thus describes cases of children in workhouses:

The three-year-old children were in a bare and desolate room, sitting about on the floor and on wooden benches, and in dismal workhouse dress. The older ones had all gone out to school . . . except a cripple, and a dreary little girl who sat in a cold room with bare legs and her feet in a pail of water as a ‘cure’ for broken chilblains. . . . The children’s wards left on our minds a marked impression of confusion and defective administration. . . . In appearance the children were dirty, untidy, ill-kept, and almost neglected. Their clothes might be described with little exaggeration as ragged . . . The boys’ day-room is absolutely dreary and bare, and they share a yard and lavatories with the young men. . . . An old man sleeps with the boys. It is a serious drawback (says the inspector) that every Saturday and Sunday, to say nothing of summer and winter holidays,

have for the most part to be spent in the workhouse, where they either live amid rigid discipline and get no freedom, or else if left to themselves are likely to come under the evil influence of adult inmates. The Local Government Board inspectors point out that, even if the children go to the elementary schools for teaching, the practice of rearing them in the workhouse exposes them to the contamination of communication with the adult inmates whose influence is often hideously depraving.

'Terrible!' my reader will say; 'but surely the reform requires legislation, and the Poor Law is too large a subject to tinker on, it must be dealt with after time has been given for due thought.' To this I would reply that even if it did require legislation there has been time enough to obtain it during all these years that the evils have existed; but to quote the Majority Report: 'So far as the "in and out" children are concerned it is probable that no further power would be needed, since the guardians already have power under the Poor Law Act, 1899, to adopt children until the age of eighteen.' This Act, I may say in passing, was initiated, drafted, and finally secured, not by the responsible authorities but by the efforts of the State Children's Association.

Why, then, has not the Local Government Board removed the children from the workhouses? Why, indeed?

(c) *The Ins and Outs*.—In 1896 the Departmental Committee quoted the evidence of Mr. Lockwood, the Local Government Board Inspector, who referred to 'cases of children who are constantly in and out of the workhouse, dragged about the streets by their parents, and who practically get no education at all,' and he puts in a table of 'particulars of eleven families representing the more prominent "ins and outs"' of one Metropolitan West-end workhouse of whom 'one family of three children had been admitted and discharged sixty-two times in thirteen months.' Other cases were given, for instance:

D—, a general labourer, who has three boys and a girl, who come in and out on an average once a week.

A family named W—. The husband drunken, and has been in an asylum; the wife unable to live with him. He would take his boys out in the early morning, leave them somewhere, meet them again at night, and bring them back to the workhouse; they had had nothing to eat, and had wandered about in the cold all day.

'This state of things is cruel and disastrous in every respect,' writes the Committee in 1896 appointed, be it remembered, by the Department to elicit facts and 'to advise as to any changes

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that may be desirable.' Yet we find that in 1909 the same conditions exist. To quote the Report :

Out of twenty special cases of which details have been obtained, twelve families have been in and out ten or more times; one child had been admitted thirty-nine times in eleven years; another twenty-three times in six years. The Wandsworth Union has a large number of dissolute persons in the workhouse with children in the intermediate schools. The parents never go out without taking the children, and seem to hold the threat of doing so as a rod over the heads of the guardians. One mother frequently had her child brought out of his bed to go out into the cold winter night. One boy who had been admitted twenty-five times in ten years had been sent more than once to Banstead Schools, but had never stayed there long. Whenever he knew he was to go there he used to write to his mother in the workhouse, when she would apply for her discharge and go out with him.

In the thirteen years which have passed since the issue of the two Reports, what has the Local Government Board done? It has induced some of the boards to establish receiving or intermediary houses at the cost, in the Metropolis, of about 200,000*l.*, but that is but attacking the symptom and leaving the disease untouched. Without an ideal for child-life or appreciation of child-nature, it has been content to let this hideous state of things go on. Again to quote the Report :

It has done nothing to prevent the children from being dragged in and out of the workhouse as it suits their parents' whim or convenience. The man or woman may take the children to a succession of casual wards or the lowest common lodging-houses. They may go out with the intention of using the children, half clad and blue with cold, as a means of begging from the soft-hearted, or they may go out simply to enjoy a day's liberty, and find the children only encumbrances, to be neglected and half starved. . . . The unfortunate boys and girls who are dragged backwards and forwards by parents of the 'in and out' class practically escape supervision. They pass the whole period of school age alternately being cleansed and 'fed up' in this or that Poor-Law institution, or starving on scraps and blows amid filth and vice in their periodical excursions in the outer world, exactly as it suits the caprice or convenience of their reckless and irresponsible parents.

And the Local Government Board has stood by for years and stands by still and lets the evils go on. Meanwhile it is the children who suffer and die; it is the children who are being robbed of their birthright of joy as they pass a miserable childhood in poverty in workhouses or in huge institutions; it is the children whose potentialities for good, and strength, and usefulness are being allowed to wither and waste and turn into evil and pain. It is the children who are needed for the nation; it is the nation who supports them; and it is the nation who must decide their future.

Speaking for myself (not in any official capacity), twenty-two

years' experience as manager of a barrack school, two years' membership of the Departmental Committee, twelve years' work as the honorary secretary of the State Children's Association have brought me to the well-grounded opinion that the children should be removed altogether from the care of the Local Government Board and placed under the Board of Education. This Board's one concern is children. Its inspectors have to consider nothing beyond the children's welfare, and its organisation admits the latest development in the art of training, both in day and boarding schools.

However much courtesy demanded moderation, the fact remains that both the Reports are a strong condemnation of the whole of the Poor-Law work of the Local Government Board, both in principle and administration. The condition of the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the mentally defective, the vagrant, the out-relief cases, as well as the children, alike come in for strong expressions of disapproval or for proposals for reform so drastic as to carry condemnation. If such a report had been issued on the work of the Admiralty or the War Office, the whole country would have demanded immediate change. 'They have tried and failed,' it would be said; 'let some one else try'; and a similar demand is made by those of us who have seen many generations of children exposed to these evils, and waited, and hoped, and despaired, and waited and hoped again. But once more some of the best brains in the country have faced the problem of the poor, and demanded reforms, and so far as the children are concerned almost the identical reforms demanded thirteen years ago; once more the nation has been compelled to turn its mind to this painful subject, and there is again ground for hope that the lives of the wanted babies will be saved, and their education be such as to fit them to contribute to the strength and honour of the nation.

HENRIETTA O. BARNETT.

THE SEVEN-THIRTY.

'Goin' off on the bust, Higgie?' Mr. Will called out in his free way as we started, and Mrs. Wuthers passed the remark that that was not the way she allowed her young men lodgers to talk to *her*. 'Why don't you git a girl to 'elp in the 'ouse? It gives you a better standing,' said she.

'I can't get on with girls,' said I rather sharp. 'Never could. You can't take your eyes off 'em for a minute without regretting it and findin' that they've been up to something as they shouldn't. Even the knife and bute boy makes me wish he'd never been born at times. And it's not that I've a nasty temper. I'm easy enough to get along with if I'm let alone.'

'Well, you're looking very poorly,' said Mrs. Wuthers with a sympathy as wasn't asked for.

'Mrs. Wuthers,' said I, quite firm, 'I don't often have an out, but when I do I want to enjoy myself. I didn't come to Sandy-beach for the day to be reminded of 'ome. Let bygones be bygones, and what shall we do first? No, I'm not going on the switchback. I've never really enjoyed a good shaking up since I began to put on weight. But why not a donkey-ride?'

A donkey-ride it was, and I should have enjoyed it if mine hadn't happened to be a tired one what needed a lot of encouragement. But I will draw a veil over the rest of the day until we'd had our tea, and Mrs. Wuthers persuaded me to have my fortune told by a gipsy on the South Shore, little thinking that with her dark words a shadow would be cast upon my sunny life. For sunny it was up to then, in spite of the bute boy. She told me secrets of the past as I'd firmly believed to be buried, an' she made me feel I could have wished that Mrs. Wuthers would mind her own business and wait out of hearing, instead of edgin' up as I could 'ear as near as possible to the tent door. She said I'd been unfortunate in my choice of a nusband, and that I had thrown away a chance of a fair gentleman with a trustful nature as 'ad loved me true. I 'eard Mrs. Wuthers sniffin' when this was said, and I knew that she was rememberin' that her John Willie had courted

me onst, and only took to 'er on the rebound, as it were, an' I felt that she was bein' 'arrowed and whether she deserved it or not for eavesdroppin' were not for me to say, but I hope I've a Christian spirit, and I said to the gipsy, I said, 'Let the dead past bury its dead. What about the future? Can you see any money in me 'and?'

The gipsy shook her head. Poor spirits she seemed to be in that afternoon.

'A little,' said she, 'and very late in life. Also a great surprise, and a quarrel, and a new friend.'

'I'm not one for pickin' up new acquaintances,' said I, hurt.

'This one will be thrust upon you, lady,' said she darkly. 'And at the same time you will lose something you deeply value by your own fatal mistake. I see a warning in your hand.'

And then she stopped sudden and wouldn't tell me another thing, drat her, unless I give her an extra shillin', and I didn't see doin' that when I got nothin' but warnin's for the first one. So I told Mrs. Wuthers that we'd ought to have known better than waste our time in such foolishness, and why not have a turn on the *Ocean Wave*?

But Mrs. Wuthers said she felt poorly already with them shrimps at tea, and that she'd heard that the *Ocean Wave* had had a naccident yesterday with the machinery, and why not go to the Queen's Ballroom and watch the dancin', and perhaps take a turn if any gentleman should 'appen to ask us? Mrs. Wuthers is forty-five and looks it, though she did put them new pink roses in her 'at, but I passed no remarks and let her have her way. It was a pleasant out enough but for that gipsy's words, and it were days before I forgot them, an' I was that low that the bute boy couldn't do anything right for me, and even Mr. Will noticed that something were wrong, and said:

'Hallo, old crumpet-face, have you lost sixpence and found a trouser button?' But I knew it was just his way, and took no offence.

You couldn't have a nicer young gentleman to do for than Mr. Will. He's lodged with me now for two years, and, barrin' the time he was goin' on his 'oliday and only found out when he was packin' that he'd never sent his grey flannel suit to the cleaner, we've never had no words between us. Thirty shillings he pays me, and never a murmur, though there isn't another lodger in the street as pays more than twenty or twenty-five. And eat? He'll

eat anything as long as there's enough of it, and never notices if there's chops to his tea every day for a fortnight—not more than to say, 'Give the old sheep a rest now, can't you, Higgie?' And then I show him that his lightest word is law to me, and give 'im filleted plaice every blessed day till he asks for chops again. A nappy, peaceful life we led in those days, and I mended his socks that careful that he'd be so grateful he'd go and buy half a dozen new pairs, to spare my eyes the fine darnin'. And he were thoughtful, too, as not many young men can be said to be, for he put all the orniments, the blue and gold glass vawses that I prized so 'igh, and the pink glass jugs with cornflowers on 'em, an' the crinkled china baskets with shepherds and such—he put all of 'em away careful in the drawer of the chiffonier. He said you never knew when a naccident might happen, and the thought of their peril got on his nerves. One in a nundred he is.

Mrs. Wuthers was always harpin' upon one string.

'You wait till he gets married,' said she. 'You wait till he gets his rise, and begins to take an interest in the gardin, and leaves furniture catalogues about the front room.' And then I said very distant that I was grown tired of waitin', and my only wish was to see 'im grow to a nappy manhood.

'E knows when 'e's got a good 'ome,' I said. But my heart grew cold within me at the bare thought. I'd had no children of my own, and he'd got round me with his free ways and his jolly laugh, not to speak of the thirty shillings a week, which was a mere nothing compared with the idea of losin' him. And what with Mrs. Wuthers' 'ints and the gipsy's warnin's, the idea began to be a naunting one. 'Don't cross your bridges before they're burnt,' says I to myself. And yet I found no real lasting comfort in the proverb. 'He's a fine, manly youth,' I says to myself, 'with a nead full of football and cricket. He doesn't play no silly mixed games with young women such as tennis or golf or 'ockey. Regards 'em as dirt beneath 'is feet, he often says so. And in the winter evenings he goes to no theatres nor 'alls. Fencin' classes and Spanish conversation lessons, and political meetings—often ending in rows, it's but too true, but, still, none of 'em leading to ladies' society.

'I won't believe he wastes a neye on the sex,' said I to Mrs. Wuthers.

'You watch him,' says she. 'You never know. Them blind ones often sees the fust. Run into a lamp-post they do

when they come to it, instead of seeing it all down the road and keeping out of its way.'

'E knows 'is lines 'as fallen in pleasant places,' said I, quiet, and dropped the subject. 'Them as lives longest sees the most.'

And then a fortnight after my day's out I had the second warning. He come home twenty minutes early one night and said he was dining out, and had I seen his dress shirt lately?

'There's three clean in your drawer, Mr. Will,' says I, dignified. 'And you might have mentioned it before.'

'Good old Higgie! Shaving-water, quick!'

'A nice 'ot tea wasted,' said I, following him down the lobby, though more in sorrow than in anger.

'Eat it yourself, Higgie. You're getting much too thin.'

Then the door banged and there was me, fourteen stone as near as makes no difference!

From fragments as I gathered while waiting on them the day young Mr. Murphy dropped in, I found that it was 'is sister on a visit from Ireland, and quite pretty-looking, too, from a photo I found in Mr. Will's jacket-pocket. My heart was like lead. I got no sleep. I didn't fancy my food. Mr. Will wanted to have a tea-party for her, but I put them off with an attack of spasms, and heaven forgive me if it was in the heart rather than in the inside.

A fortnight she stayed, and me on 'ot irons all the time, and then Mr. Will told me that she was going back to Dublin the next day.

'We're all breaking our hearts for her,' he said in his jolly, open way. 'I'm going to see her for the last time at Charling to-morrow. She's going by the eight-thirty, you see—*my* train—and she gets out at Charling and waits for the nine-five to Liverpool. I shall get out with her and we shall be able to have a nice long talk—twenty minutes. I can't see her off, because I shall have to catch the nine-three on to town. Still, we can have a nice talk. Don't let me miss my train, Higgie. Murphy can't go.'

A nice talk! The wild joy I had felt at the news of her going away melted like snow on the mountains. Ah! I knew what that meant, with poor, tender-hearted Mr. Will at the mercy of that girl with her big eyes—asking for a noffer, I daresay, all the time—and her Irish ways—Cork she comes from. Well, I ask you.

He went to bed smiling and happy, I shouldn't wonder. And I—well, I sat down and cried my heart out. And then I had my supper—toasted cheese and onions it was, for I'd no appetite for

solids—and I thought and thought, and did my best to find a plan to save poor Mr. Will. And nothing come to me until I went into the front room to see if Mr. Will had left the winder open—through a horrible passion for fresh air he has—and to wind the clock up, and then, finding it had lost an hour, as usual, I was just going to move the hands, when I thought of something. It's a beautiful timepiece—a pinky-yellow marble, very nicely mottled, and presented to my husband on 'is marriage by the Ancient Order of Buffaloes, inscription an' all. 'If I was to leave this blessed timepiece alone,' said I, thoughtful, 'a hour behind, as Providence has arranged it, he will miss the eight-thirty, and he'll miss *her*, and when he gets to town she'll be safe on her way to Ireland. Now, then !'

I tried to think it out. Mr. Will was called at a quarter to eight. He rushed into 'is cold bath at eight an' swallowed 'is good bacon whole, and gulped his tea, if it was cool enough—quite pleased he used to be when the kettle 'ad been off the boil—and run to the station. He never looked at his watch, and if he did it was but an unreliable one, as he well knew, and he looked to me to keep him straight.

'He'll never know till he gets to town,' said I, and then a awful thought seized me. Mr. Will had often told me what a norrer his boss had of unpunctuality in the staff, and how he always came early himself to see that he wasn't being deceived.

'Pore Briggs,' said he to me only last week, 'came an hour late for the second time, and the boss told him they'd done so well without him in that hour that he thought they could do without him altogether.'

Mr. Will mustn't lose his job through me. I gave up the idea and put the hands of the clock on, and I was so worried that I didn't see that I'd put it an hour fast.

'There !' said I. 'And it's bad for it to be put back. All round again I've got to go. Drat it !'

And then I stopped.

Why not leave it like that ? He wouldn't be late for office then. Yet he'd be too late to see Miss Murphy off for Liverpool from Charling, for he'd never know till he got to town.

The bute boy wouldn't have come. I could clean them brown butes myself. The milk wouldn't have come. Make his tea with Swiss. I've done it before. The letters wouldn't have come. Well, he doesn't always get any, and them often bills.

Every objection was answered. There were risks, of course. He might think she had gone by somebody's motor or something, and got out at Charling, just the same, when he found she wasn't going by the eight-thirty, or he might discover his mistake in time to get a train back to Charling from town. What I hoped he'd do was to take it for granted that she'd changed her mind about going, and when I looked in the guide and found that there was no train back from town till 8.45 I knew that the railway company at least was on my side, and therefore why not Providence?

I didn't sleep a wink all night, but lay watching my three-and-sixpenny alarum till six o'clock, and then I crep' down and polished his brown butes lovely, and laid the table, and at ten to seven I called him, and said, 'It's late, Mr. Will—ten to.'

I heard him rush to his bath. Look at his watch? Not him! While he was in his bath I crep' in his room and put his watch on, and I put the kitchen clock on too, for fear he should come out as he sometimes did to tell the bute boy what sort of an end would come to him if he went on smearing blacking on the laces as he was doing.

But he rushed his breakfast, and swallowed his tea, and jammed his straw 'at on, and slammed the front door; and I sat down sudden on the rocking-chair, and thanked my stars that, so far, all was well.

Fancy my feelings all that day! So much at stake and not knowin' anything till he come in at six for his tea. I got him a duckling—I did indeed—and a pound of strawberries which were going a little, the greengrocer said, and so I might have them for fourpence. And in he came at six, smiling and jolly, and called out:

'Hurry up, Higgle! I've been feeling as if I'd missed a meal all day. Look here, don't you go getting me up again in the grey dawn like this, or you'll hear about it. What's wrong with your clock, anyhow? Have you been winding it up, or doing something it isn't used to?'

Seeing that he now knew all, I thought it only honest to tell him the truth.

'The clock was an hour fast, Mr. Will,' said I, apologising. 'I do hope it hasn't put you out, sir.'

He laughed softly and stared out of the window.

'Well—no—I rather like it. The early morning's so jolly, isn't it? So fresh and—and early, and all that sort of thing, don't

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you know? Fact is, Higgie, we waste too much of these glorious summer days in bed. You've created a precedent now. I really think I shall go by the seven-thirty to-morrow.'

I stared at him in silent horror. Me, at my time of life, getting up at half-past five every morning! No!

'I do hope, Mr. Will,' I said, humble, 'that the acciden' didn't cause you to miss Miss Murphy?'

He stared at me.

'By George!' he said, 'Higgie, I forgot all about it. I was going to see her off, wasn't I? Poor little girl! Well, perhaps it was all for the best. She's a terrible little chatterbox, and ten to one I'd have been late for biz. Call me at a quarter to seven to-morrow, Higgie, won't you? Won't be bad for your rheumatics or anything, will it? You can always have a good sleep in the middle of the morning, can't you?'

How like a man! I left him in dignified sorrow. I had only myself to thank for it, but what comfort was that? What comfort is it ever?

I hoped it was one of his jokes; but no. Every blessed morning he got up like a lark at a quarter to seven, and it really seemed a deal easier to get him up for that train than it ever had been for the eight-thirty. It was beyond me. But still, in spite of the early rising, which never had suited me, I felt that my plan had come off in itself. I'd saved him from that Irish girl, and when the dark mornings came again he'd think twice before he left his warm bed earlier than the last possible moment. I don't believe he thought of *her* from that moment, and when her photo actually fell into his water-jug, where I happened to lay it on the edge as I was dusting, he never asked no questions, and I burnt it with a thankful heart.

This had happened about a month before his 'olidays, and I was glad they weren't far off, for in a week or so he began to get very quiet and take no interest in his meals. He'd sit smilin' at his plate, too, in a foolish way I didn't like at all. And then his clothes! He'd always had a weakness for fancy vests, but he'd bought no new ones this summer as yet, and wore the same old blue tie day in day out.

'Why don't you get a nice new summer suit, Mr. Will?' I asked him, quite frank. 'A nice check, now, or a warm brown with a bit of red in the stripe. They've some awfully nice fancy suitings this year. Your cuffs is all getting frayed at the edges, too. But

you'll p'r'aps be waiting for your 'olidays? And then your tie's a bit messy-looking, if I may take the liberty.'

He looked at it, shabby it was—very—in the mirror, and then he smiled.

'It's the colour of my eyes, you see,' said he. 'I must always wear a tie the colour of my eyes.'

I saw then that his 'olidays were coming none too soon, for when a sporting young gentleman like Mr. Will begins to talk about the colour of his eyes it stands to reason as there's a slate loose somewhere. And anxious was no word for my feelings. I felt like a mother to him, and I went out and bought a box of iron pills directly I'd had my tea. And yet in spite of his queerness I had no idea of the shocking truth—no more had Mrs. Wuthers. When he brought the little stamp photo and put it on the front-room mantelpiece I thought nothing of it—not even curly 'air she adn't and no pretence at style. Even then I only said, enquiring like, what a nice face his sister 'ad; and he said, 'Now, you know I haven't got a sister, Higgie,' and changed the subject. And all went on as usual till the day his 'oliday began—ten days he was to have, too. I noticed the night before that he'd brought home a new suit—a lightish grey with a green line in it—and brown boots, which he was rather worried about, being lighter than what he'd been led to believe in the shop, and no time to have 'em darkened now. But in the morning he came up to me, all pale and shaky and his eyes shining, and he said, without a word of warning:

'Oh, Higgie, wish me joy, won't you? I do want someone to wish me joy to-day.'

I sat down sudden 'an just looked at him, and he said—oh, my goodness me!—

'It's your doing, Higgie, you know. You played Providence to us. If you hadn't sent me flying off to catch the dear old seven-thirty that blessed morning—well, we should never have seen each other. Life would still have been a desert to us two.'

I put out a trembling hand and told him for mercy's sake to let me know the worst.

'Why, *she* goes by that train every day,' said he joyfully. 'You should see her eyes, Higgie!—like stars, and yet so dark and kind—and her pretty hair all soft and brown—and her lips—and her little hands. She worked in an office, typewriting—think of it!—until to-day. She shall never work again.'

I gasped.

‘If you think, Mr. Will,’ said I, in a weak voice, ‘that a man can keep a wife and family on two ’undred a year without ’er workin’, you’re making the biggest mistake that——’

And then he took ’old of my ’ands and swirled me round that blessed front room till I didn’t know whether I were on my ’ead or my ’eels, and told me that they were to be married at one o’clock, and going to Port Erin for their honeymoon. And that then—then—he should bring her home to live with me till he could afford to buy furniture for a little home of their own.

‘You’ll love her, Higgie,’ said he. Lord, what fools men can be!

I wished him joy, and crep’ out of the room with a broken ’eart.

‘Make the house nice for her before I bring her home, won’t you, Higgie?’ he cried, as he went off in a nansom cab. ‘Fill the rooms with flowers. She loves flowers.’

But I’d no ’eart to answer ’im then.

Me? Me with a lady lodger? Me, to fill my beautiful ornaments with nasty vegetables droppin’ all over the beautiful furniture!

I crep’ back into the front room, where he’d never eaten a morsel of breakfast, an’ I sat down on the gent’s red plush easy in front of the grate, and I looked at that dratted marble timepiece sittin’ tickin’ there at me like mad, and I clutched my ’ead with my ’ands.

‘Sure to love ’er? Me? Lord,’ said I at last, ‘these men!’

DOROTHEA DEAKIN.

THE OLDEST OF HORTICULTURAL SOCIETIES.

MEMBERS of the R.H.S. may take it for granted that our title refers to their renowned society. Its claim to be the oldest of such associations is generally acknowledged. M. Baltet admits it in his authoritative work upon the subject, though he had heard something of the *Confrérie de Ste. Dorothee* evidently. In the register of names the Royal Horticultural stands earliest beyond question, for the French *Société d'Horticulture*, which comes next, founded in 1827, is twenty-three years younger. Certainly it is remarkable that this country should have taken the lead, for the science of gardening was already advanced in Holland, Flanders, France, and part of Germany when it was only recognised here by a few gentlemen who had gained their knowledge on the Continent. Simon Hartlib, Milton's friend, writing in 1649, declares that old men in Surrey still recollected the advent of the first 'gardeners' established there. They found intense prejudice among the landowners, who believed that spade-work injured the soil. 'Even now,' Hartlib proceeds, 'gardening is scarcely known in the north and west, where a little of it might have saved the lives of many poor people who starved in the last few years'—he is referring to the cultivation of vegetables. The English imported 'even plants that grow wild in the hedgerows' because they would not take the trouble to gather them. As for orchards, they had actually gone back of late. The same protest against our national idleness and stupidity had been uttered a hundred years before, and we hear it daily now. Possibly it may have an effect some time. We have learned horticulture at any rate.

But there was a chartered Company of Gardeners at the time Hartlib wrote, with a master, two wardens, twenty-four assistants, a beadle—a gold chain and a collar, no doubt. This fact does not contradict his statement, but it suggests exaggeration. The Gardeners' Company, however, is more mysterious than any of those mysterious bodies. It was founded in 1606 to put a stop to frauds practised by gardeners in the City. The definition seems odd. 'City' was used in the strict sense then. And what sort of frauds did the ingenuity of English gardeners contrive at the

very beginning of the seventeenth century? Is it possible that the term included greengrocers and herbalists?

The first Briton on record, I think, to introduce the scientific gardening of the Continent was a Welshman—William Herbert, of Troy House, Monmouth; the name of his residence, which sounds so modern, would be taken from 'a game of Troy,' or maze, in the grounds, much appreciated by the neighbouring gentry, no doubt. In the reign of Henry VIII. William Herbert sent two young men to study the culture of fruit, flowers and vegetables in France and Flanders; also to forward any plants or trees which they thought worth the cost. Eight years the young men spent abroad, and one died in returning. They had done their work well. The flowers may or may not have been duly appreciated, but the fruit roused enthusiasm. More than a century afterwards Charles I. begs, in a letter extant, for some of the fine pears sent him from Troy House the year before.

But very, very few Englishmen showed such intelligent enterprise as William Herbert. Those who travelled must have remarked the fine gardens abroad, but it seems likely that they thought soil or climate would forbid the imitation of them at home. We read of lovely gardens at Great Tew and other noble houses; but it was loveliness unassisted by art generally. In 1645 Sir Richard Sutton startled the squires of England with his 'Discourse upon Husbandrie used in Brabant and Flanders.' It is noteworthy that this good man never acknowledged the authorship of this treatise in any way. Modesty does not seem an adequate motive when there is no evidence. Was it because he feared the prejudice of landowners which Hartlib denounced? Sutton Place is in the same county of Surrey. But Sir Richard had good cause to be proud. The article in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' declares that his little book marks 'the dawn of the vast improvement which has since been effected in England.'

It deals with horticulture only in passing; the superiority of the Flemings in matters far more serious called for attention. But Sir Richard assures his readers that it was not less wonderful in gardening than in agriculture; and how wonderful that appeared to an enthusiast is shown in the Foreword addressed to his son: 'You shall learn how to do more than treble your principal in one year's compass, and you shall see how an industrious man in Brabant or Flanders would bring 500 acres of barren and heathy land that is not worth more than 5*l.* a year at most to be worth

more than 7000*l.* a year in less time than seven years.' There is no reason to think that Sir Richard, or his son, performed such a miracle; scientific agriculturists never make a fortune, as witness Arthur Young and William Cobbett. But he convinced a few of his contemporaries of their own blank ignorance upon the subject, and so in time caused a revolution.

I was well aware of these and many other facts, which proved how greatly the Flemings excelled all Europe, and England especially, in gardening until, say, the middle of the eighteenth century. Then our people began to catch them up, though they remained superior long afterwards. But it was almost startling to learn at Bruges, the other day, that an association of amateurs equivalent to the horticultural societies of our time existed there in 1651—founded probably some years earlier, many perhaps. It was called the *Confrérie de Ste. Dorothée*. At this date the members undertook to adorn the Chapel of the Franc—as we might say, the Guildhall—for the fête of their patroness, February 5. One of them, perhaps the founder, was Antonius van Triest, afterwards Bishop of Bruges, whose garden was so renowned twenty years before that Sanderus the historian thought it worth notice.

Three years later, 1654, a casual document surviving tells a few details about the *Confrérie*. That season the members numbered twelve, described as *Bloemlievende Geesten*—literally, 'Plant-loving Souls.' Four were Churchmen, the Archdeacon of Bruges, a canon of the Cathedral, the pasteur and vicar of Notre-Dame. The burgomaster was an honorary member. A rule decreed that the *Confrérie* should 'dine and enjoy themselves,' after hearing Mass at the Franc, and electing a president for the season, on Ste. Dorothée's day.

After an interval of twenty years, in 1674, we have another reference. The dinners had swamped enthusiasm apparently. 'A few devotees of horticulture' carried a resolution to reform the society, 'because the public had grown indifferent to it.' Evidently a revolt. Either some members were requested to resign, or else the number was increased. The reformers chose a new president, the pasteur of Notre-Dame, and, for the first time, a secretary. It would seem that the flower-show—that is, the annual decoration of the altar in the chapel of the Franc—had been discontinued, which explains the 'indifference' of the public. That was the only visible sign of the *Confrérie's* existence apparently. They decided to resume the pious exhibition.

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In 1680 the secretary died, and his plants were sold by auction. The catalogue was extant not long ago. It would, or might, have yielded precious evidence of the species known and favoured at the time among wealthy amateurs. But the document has vanished; no one took a copy, and all that remains now is an impression that ranunculus, anemone, and various bulbs figured in it.

A long break in the record follows, but we know that the guild was alive and busy, though short of cash perhaps. For in 1701, 'to show their zeal and affection for the Confrérie de Ste. Dorothée, the amateurs' of Bruges registered a solemn promise to hand over 'the twentieth denier (five per cent.) on all moneys received by them for flowers sold within the town, for the profit of the said Confrérie.' There are several points worth note in this resolution. We observe that a trade in flowers was already established at Bruges two centuries ago. It was in the hands of 'amateurs,' in part at least—perhaps members of the society are indicated. The limitation of the percentage to sales 'in the town' will be observed. Even at that time Bruges had gained a reputation for bay trees, which were in general demand on the Continent; those who have money enough may still buy specimens almost as old as 1700. To avoid interference with this trade perhaps transactions with the foreigner were excepted. The equivocal word 'flowers' may have been chosen to cover dealings in plants as well.

At the same time, we learn, the society offered rewards for new plants and improved methods of culture; to this purpose the commission on sales was devoted probably, since the Guild had no income besides the trifling fines mentioned. In 1702 Antonius Verhulst, a member, introduced the potato, and put in his claim for the reward, which was admitted. We may feel surprise that the tuber had not reached Bruges at a much earlier date, if De l'Ecluse, the Viennese botanist, wrote in 1588 that it was so common in Italy as to be food for pigs. Then, as now, Belgium swarmed with priests, who should have been familiar with a vegetable so well known across the Alps. But it is more than likely that De l'Ecluse made a mistake; possible even that De Candolle, from whom I take the statement, misunderstood his letter. At any rate the people of Bruges could not be induced to eat potatoes. Poor Verhulst had to content himself with the reward. No one would buy his tubers, though offered in open market at a nominal price. A similar prejudice ruled elsewhere. Our Puritan forefathers rejected them because there is no reference to potatoes in

the Bible—so says Lord Morley. On the eve of the French Revolution Turgot could not persuade the starving people of the Limousin to try them; they thought an epidemic of leprosy would follow. In the end, Verhulst distributed his stock among the few persons who would accept such a dubious boon.

For all its good works the society languished once more. The list of members suggests a reason. Nearly all saving the clerics belonged to the rich bourgeoisie, a class famed for love of banqueting everywhere, especially perhaps in Flanders. And meetings always ended with a feast. At any rate, the energetic minority proposed and carried another reconstruction in 1719. The name was changed. Saints had begun to lose something of their prestige, and the remodelled *Confrérie* took Flora for its patroness instead of Dorothea. Improved rules made it more business-like. Doubtless the members still attended service on St. Dorothea's Day, but the obligation was omitted. They had only to assemble at the Franc on February 5, with a significant addition, 'ze keren luister,' which means 'in state'—full dress and carriage—to visit one another's gardens in turn. Curious regulations follow. If in any garden the show of flowers did not come up to the mark the owner was fined a shilling. When we recall that the day was February 5, it must be assumed that every member had a forcing-pit and a conservatory to keep the blooms when open; for how many plants are in flower out of doors even now on February 5? But the conclusion is surprising. Of course it was Dutchmen, or Flemings, who invented glasshouses and discovered the art of forcing; that is, in modern times, for Roman gardeners must have been familiar with it when they bloomed roses at Christmas; and they learned from the Egyptians probably, if the report of Athenaeus may be trusted. Philip Miller's book assures us that forcing was known even in England in his time. But Lady Mary Wortley Montagu must have been familiar from childhood with the greatest houses here, and the astonishment she expressed in 1716, when, dining with the King at Hanover, she was offered fruit out of season, shows how rare the process must have been. 'I am surprised we do not practise such a useful innovation in England,' Lady Mary wrote. But clergymen, merchants, and tradesmen in Bruges seem to have regarded it as a thing of course.

An odd rule authorised a member to demand that any plant in a colleague's garden which struck his fancy during the inspection should be put up to auction then and there, and sold to the highest

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bidder. Probably this has some bearing on another rule, more extraordinary still. 'A member who keeps any flower after two yearly visits of the Confrérie shall pay a fine of two escallings.' No explanation is forthcoming.

Up to this time members had not been asked for a subscription. But in 1709 twenty penninges were demanded; three years later, five schellingen—2.70 francs. Doubtless that sum represented twice its value now, but for men who could make a good show of flowers on February 5 it seems rather absurd. The reluctance of Belgians to part with their cash is an hereditary characteristic. Moreover, half the subscription became due in winter, half in summer.

From this date till 1803 the records are lost, which may be taken to signify that the Confrérie declined again gradually—in zeal, if not in numbers—and for the old cause—its feasts attracted men little interested in horticulture. It may have been a superstitious hope of restoring the good old time which led members to dismiss the heathen Flora and return to the cult of Dorothea in 1803; but they dropped the 'Saint' and the French title, calling themselves Confraters van Dorothea. There is a hint of political changes in each case. So the abandonment of the altar of the Franc for a 'stage' in the Magdalen Chapel of St. Catherine's church has its significance probably. Henceforward every member had to exhibit four plants, 'decorative' perhaps, or four in flower, each in its own pot, on February 5, paying 1½*d.* for every one short of this number. Kind fortune has preserved a catalogue of the show in 1804. The lots were 189: to wit, 159 bulbs (hyacinths, narcissus, and crocus), six iris, five China roses, nine hepaticas, two cyclamens, one daphne, two jasmines, one auricula, one soldanella, two solanums, two laurustinus, five urticas—all without specific names. Also a cactus, a thaulus (? trollius), and a muguetboom (? lily of the valley).

Next year occurs the first suggestion of prizes—a silver medal offered by the president for the best ranunculus. It was not awarded. Then the vice-president gave a silver medal for the best plant forced and the best grown tulip. Catalogues are extant from 1806.

But it was not to be supposed that in a land so devout the omission of Dorothea's claim to sanctity would be accepted without protest. The malcontents did not secede, but they started an exhibition of their own in the church of St. Sauveur. Therefore

the majority resolved, as a compromise, that the name should be changed once more. *Bruggsche Maatschappij van Flora* was chosen; the badge, representing a rose, is highly valued at the present day.

We have reached and passed the date when our own Royal Horticultural Society was launched, a hundred and sixty years at least after its Flemish rival. But the latter has gone under five names, if not more. For in 1828 it became the *Société Provinciale d'Horticulture et Botanique de la Flandre Occidentale*—a title to conjure with, surely. Nevertheless, only four members remained in 1858. At length, one might say, the ancient *Confrérie* was doomed. But the announcement of the danger saved it. The amateurs of Bruges, a host, hurried to the rescue, and started it afresh, as the *Société Royale d'Horticulture et Arboriculture*. Under that renowned appellation it flourishes like one of its own bay trees, after two centuries and a half of the varied fortune I have sketched.

FREDERICK BOYLE.

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ANOTHER LETTER FROM A PORTUGUESE
COUNTRY HOUSE.

May 1908.

In the snuggest hollow of the rolling Quinta, sheltered on every side by slopes now thickly green with beans and maize, with strong young corn and the leafage of vines, is the garden; or rather the twin-gardens, for the two lie side by side in their high-walled enclosure. The one is for the most part a grove of orange and lemon trees, hung with globes of gold—here clear and coolly pale, there richly glowing; but almond and cherry, pear and peach stand also ankle-deep in patches of homely vegetable, besides medlars covered with amber balls, as good to eat as they are pretty to look at, and fig trees, whose luscious fruit is yet to come. In their midst, under a wide-spreading pavilion, is the well. Its waters are laboriously scooped up by means of a small bucket fixed to a long and cunningly weighted pole and find their way through narrow runnels to every part of the enclosure. This garden with its hedges of blush roses and its borders of violets and freesias is a delight, but the joy of my heart is the other garden! Laid out, no one knows how many years ago—generations, any way, before the house was built, it has long since fallen into neglect. But it is a neglect that has made for beauty. In the morning and at evening I love to pace its grass-grown alleys breathing in the mingled perfumes of roses and lilies, of sweet-peas and carnations, while whiffs of lemon-blossom steal in through the wicket that leads from the orchard hard by, meeting the sharp pungency of *Alecrim da Norte*, the northern rosemary, or the aroma of lavender. High walls of box there are, affording scented shade even at the sunniest of noontides, and if they are never clipped into prim precision, all the better for the multitude of feathered things that make their home therein.

Great is the Portuguese *caçador*, like unto his Spanish and Italian brothers, in the slaughter of small birds, but Donna Emilia will not suffer a gun within her domains, and all day long, this merry month of May, a perfect carnival of courtship goes on with trillings and pipings, and flutings and callings, and floods of melody poured forth to the droning bass of honey-heavy bees. Butterflies, as well

as birds, flit in and out of the tall screens of interwoven polished foliage, and small green frogs drop heavily from branch to branch, while bright-eyed lizards flash—streaks of emerald lightning—across the mossy flanking paths.

The boundary of my favourite path on its far side is a low stone wall, broad enough to be inset with seats alternating with beds, which are just now one wild profusion of pink lilies and delicate miniature iris, things of beauty, with their gold-pencilled purple petals. In earlier spring, it is here the violets grow in rank luxuriance, making a scented carpet, from which rise clusters of jonquil and narcissus, and in the red-watered moat beyond the yellow flags in vain endeavour to grasp the rosy wreaths of almond blossom, stretching with such coquettish allurements over the grey walls of the adjacent orchard. But the flags furled themselves full two months ago and nought but the tall green blades from which they sprang remain, while fruit is already forming in place of the vanished blossoms. Oh! it is sweet to linger in the old sunk garden amid a tangle of flowers left so long ago to grow and multiply at their own sweet will, whose thousand interwoven perfumes mount with such subtle intoxication to the brain. Here in this dewy corner a tall Annunciation lily opened great pure eyes at dawn, that seem to gaze in chaste aloofness at the purple Bougainvillea clasping the date palms in such passionate embrace. There, across the way, a pomegranate, set about with tufts of scarlet flame, laughs—reckless as any Bacchante, at the nunlike Arum that stands apart with stiff and slender grace. Yonder the ground is a network of sweet-pea, all velvety, maroon and violet; hard by, a patch of red carnations pour forth their spicy fragrance. Honeysuckle flings its yellow trails in languorous caress of all within its reach, and geranium bushes flaunt their wealth of vivid vermilion rosettes in every scrap of sunny open. In the shade of two mighty araucarias, ferns that would make the fortune of a West End florist flourish exceedingly, side by side with orchids of curious resemblance to bees with wings of delicate lilac. Roses are everywhere—roses red and roses white, roses pink and blush, and yellow and mauvy amber. Cabbage roses—oh! such mines of perfume, tea roses and Maréchal Niels, blush roses and Banksia, Noisette, and cottage roses—to my mind sweetest of all. Roses in thickets, roses climbing trellises in densely clustering masses, roses falling athwart old walls in wanton cascades of colour and fragrance, roses garlanding deserted arbours, roses clutching at you as you make your way down long-

untrodden paths. And, at one end of the terrace that skirts the *Paçácio*, where the broken sundial lies among the oleanders and along whose balustrade great blue and white vases of glazed earthenware stand at intervals overflowing with trails of scarlet geranium and yellow-starred musk—there is a parterre of roses. It is here I cut some hundreds daily for the decoration of dinner-table and living rooms. I might take thousands—they would never be missed. The supply is inexhaustible and my scissors cannot keep pace with the multitudes that unfold new beauties to the sun each morning.

In the depths of my dear garden—surely no sleeping beauty ever woke to the kiss of her lover in a more enchanting bower—all, save for the song of birds, the cooing of doves and the drowsing hum of bees, is silence. A great lizard fully two feet long, who clasps the top of a post with skinny hands and clings with bright green body and tapering bronze tail to its sides, blinks sleepily at me with eyes set in a head of metallic blue, as motionless as I who fear to send him darting to his secret lair in the grove of feathery pampas hard by.

Suddenly from some remote corner of the *Quinta* come the voices of the girls at work among the vines, rising into long-drawn not untuneful chants, which, with their final minor cadences, are fraught with all the mysterious melancholy of the East. Whence did they get their song? Was it from gypsy ancestors? The fields of Hungary rise before me as I listen, and wild inarticulate melodies heard among the Carpathians echo in my ears. Or is it a legacy from the Moors, who bequeathed so many indelible traces to the land of their adoption? Mingled with the unalterable *Sehnsucht* of the formless melody I seem to hear the far-away beat of the tom-tom, throbbing on air as hot and still as that of some African desert.

For it is not in song alone that here we recognise the East, but also in the cold gaze of dark eyes, in the dainty proportions of high-insteped feet, and in the love of vivid colour and personal adornment, so peculiarly noticeable among those that garner the harvest, whether it be that of the fields or of the sea. The peasant-wife who jogs by on her donkey to market, perched between her panniers of beans or Indian corn, the fishermaid who squats cross-legged in the *Praça* with her basket of soles and turbot before her, the girl who weeds and hoes in springtime, and gathers in the vintage when autumn is over the land, balancing on her head

weights that I cannot stir with my two hands, and moving with the carriage of a queen—their muffled heads recalling the Oriental veil as the heavy draping of their forms does the yashmak—one and all love to bind scarlet kerchiefs about their brows and to don skirts of pink or yellow, buff or magenta, which, kilted high on the hips, make spots of brilliant colour in the distance. They know not shoes or stockings, but ornaments of pure gold glitter in their small ears even while they dig and delve, and their persons are veritable jewellers' *étalages* whenever fitting occasion for display presents itself.

How they amass this treasure of gold, and this, too, in its most unalloyed form, is an unsolved riddle to me. Most of the store hoarded by their grandmothers was earned at a time when a day's work, literally from the rising to the setting of the sun, only brought in its 3½d. The passing of the years has doubled this wage, but life is not much easier to be lived now than it was half a century ago. If the cheapness of ready-made clothing, of ghastly lace-trimmed blouses and shoddy suits has ousted to a deplorable degree the often picturesque and always dignified costumes that were still general some fifty years ago, the price of the elementary necessities of life has quadrupled. The house of the ordinary peasant is bare to destitution, his windows are unglazed, and he and his family eat squatting on the clay floor of what is little better than a hovel, gathered round a central bowl, into which each dips his or her spoon without further ceremony. We shall not see this if we peep through the open doors of the tiny houses that shelter the working man of Figueira da Foz—the little seaport town whose white walls gleam pearly through the blue haze two miles away to the south on the edge of the Mondego—but we may if we wander north to the heights or *Serra* behind us. The wretched hamlets that lie along the crest of the green-fluffed ridge are not the collections of pigsties and stables for which it would be easy to mistake them, but the abodes of human habitation, swarmed over by tribes of dark-eyed, Murillo-like children, of gaunt, half-famished dogs, of lean and ever-hungry goats. And who shall cast the first stone at the squalor, at the lack, indeed, of common decency in which the Portuguese peasant is forced to live? Last of all may the law-makers of this misgoverned country! Exorbitant duties, of export as of import, and an atrocious octroi-system are not the sole grievances under which the long-suffering Portuguese has to groan. State monopoly takes toll of the glass with which,

in consequence, none but the comparatively well-to-do among the labouring classes can afford to fill their windows, of the straw hat, which, consequently, has not succeeded in replacing the quaint pointed cap of black cotton inherited by the *camponezo* from his grandfather, or the coloured kerchief of his wife and daughters, of the cigar which is his sole luxury, of the match with which he lights it. And these are only a few of the monopolies grasped by the State. Most heavily of all presses that of lucifer matches. Woe betide the unfortunate peasant who conceals tinder and flint in his cottage. Imprisonment and heavy fine are his lot if detection follows. A year or two back, when, with Hintze Ribeiro at its head, the Republican party was at the upper end of the political see-saw, it was in all seriousness proposed to make bread a State monopoly. Fortunately for itself, the Government stopped short of this crowning iniquity. If punishment came later, it fell, alas ! on the comparatively innocent, the guilty escaped and the last state of the *camponezo* is worse than the first.

Happily for him, mother earth is prodigal of her favours in this blest land of fertile soil and balm-breathing dewy air, and the glow of health is seldom absent from the peasant's swarthy cheek. He owns the land whereon he dwells, and it seldom fails to produce the handful of beans, the measure of oil and of wine, that with a penny-worth of sardines or a shred or two of sausage form the staple food of those that live by the sweat of their brow. The Indian corn, ground in the tiny wooden windmills which, spiking the breezy ridges all around us, are such picturesque features of the landscape, is also home-grown. These little mills may well be numerous, for it is of this meal that the daily bread of agricultural Portugal is made. This *broa*, so called to distinguish it from *paõ*, or wheaten bread, is a compound, stodgy and satisfying to the last degree. A very superior kind of *broa* is sometimes baked for the proper celebration of highdays and holidays, when it goes by the name of *portas* or cake. Would you like to introduce it at your next tea-party ? If so, you must take equal proportions of Indian corn and ordinary flour and add a modicum of yeast. Butter comes next, then raisins, chopped walnuts and *pinhões* (the seeds of the giant pine), ground cinnamon, too, and any other spices your individual fancy may suggest. For sole moisture, stir in the pulp of boiled pumpkin. Then divide the dough thus formed into loaves and bake. The result is not unpalatable, though it must be confessed that a little of it goes a long way !

If the material wants of the Portuguese peasant are few, his intellectual requirements are satisfied even more easily. Theoretically, every one in the country can read and write. As a matter of fact, not one in ten can do so. Though the lack of such distinction is a bar to the much esteemed privilege of a vote (esteemed, I fear, more often on account of its pecuniary value than from any idea of the personal dignity it may bestow), the majority of labouring men only acquire the rudiments of education during their term of compulsory military service, while, as may be imagined, by far the greater number of women go through life unable to sign their own names or read that of another. None of the peasant's hard-earned *reis*, therefore, are devoted to literature in any form, not a newspaper, even, finds its way into his smoke-darkened den. Nor, to his credit, does the tavern take toll of his scanty wage. During the course of many and prolonged visits to Portugal, I have never once seen an intoxicated person, and even on the occasions of family festivity or social gathering, the public house is not chosen as the scene of conviviality. This abstemiousness—and the Portuguese peasant eats no more copiously than he drinks—is probably one of the contributory factors to the very high character of rural conduct. While it is true that in the parts where I now am (Figueira is the haunt of pleasure-seekers in the summer, of sea-faring men of every nation all the year round) the standard of morality is lamentably low, very different, in this respect, is the interior of the country. These more unsophisticated regions breed a race of men upright and self-respecting, of women chaste and faithful. In Portugal's mountain fastnesses, the locks of a girl who has been led astray are clipped completely short, and not suffered to grow till subsequent marriage acts as a magic hair-restorer.

Amusements that involve payment do not tempt many *reis* out of the peasant's slender purse. The one form of entertainment which the fairly pecunious find irresistible is, of course, the *Corrida da toros*. This is too costly, however, to be within the reach of the majority of the peasantry, the cheapest seats in the bull-ring of Figueira—those exposed to the sun throughout the whole length of the performance—costing 300 *reis*, or 1s. 2½d. each. These Portuguese *Corridas*, please remember, are conducted on lines altogether humane and unobjectionable, and differ entirely from the savage bull-fight of Spain, which is condemned as unreservedly in this country as in our own. After the bull-

fight comes the drama, though even this is not a luxury attainable by all. Still, in every Portuguese village, however small, you will notice, conspicuous among the white-walled, flat-roofed, Eastern-looking houses, a large barn-like structure, in form and absence of ornament so strongly suggestive of the 'Bethels' and 'Bethesdas' scattered broadcast all over Wales, that there is something very funny in its being proudly pointed out as 'Nostro Teatro.' The building is generally the property of a sort of informal club. The particular one I have, for instance, in my mind, is owned by a society of some hundred members, who pay all expenses of repairs and lighting out of a monthly subscription of 5½d.; and there are many such, at which, with the object of circumventing the heavy Government tax on all places of public amusement, no entrance money is charged, admission being by tickets, of which each member has a share—proportionate to his subscription—for his family and friends. In other places a charge of eighty *reis* or one *testões* (4½d. or 5½d.) is made for a seat. This necessarily excludes all but those in comparatively easy circumstances, but it covers all expenses, including taxes. The young men and lads of the village furnish the *corps dramatique*, even playing the female parts, as, in a country where the principle of the seclusion of woman is carried to almost Oriental lengths, it is seldom a girl can be persuaded to lend her services. Scenery also, and, except on very great occasions, costume is of home production, and this presents the less difficulty as farces, or melodramas, illustrative of everyday life form by far the largest part of the *répertoire*. The orchestra, too, is supplied by local talent, and will consist of a score or so of guitars, flutes and violins, besides a violoncello and the inevitable *viola*, while a couple of boys will handle their tambourines with amazing dexterity, twirling them behind their backs or under their knees, or tapping with elbow, knee, or any other projection that comes handy.

As I have said, the Portuguese *camponezo* is a hard-working person of sturdy independence. He is also honest—as far as his lights go. If, at fair-time, he finds himself without the wherewithal to complete an unforeseen purchase, his word, although he may be a complete stranger to all around him, is as good as his bond. Highway robbery is unknown, and it is only I who conjure visions of burglars out of the rats that scamper o' nights along the deserted corridors of the lonely *Palacio*. If Encarnação, the presiding genius of Donna Emilia's kitchen, choose to surfeit the servants'

hall with fish in place of meat, because the fluctuating price of the former forbids too close a control of the pence entrusted to her for the day's marketing; if the rose or the lily I have watched from earliest bud to bursting blossom, rejoicing in its dawning beauty and in the exquisite effect it will have in my aunt's favourite vase, if it vanish at break of day to reappear in the *Praça* and entice a few reis into Dorinda's pocket; if not a girl in the Quinta but knows that the best oranges grow on a tree which never seems to furnish any for the mistresses' table—well! who would make great peccadilloes out of little ones? The Portuguese is only a conscious thief (and, even then, he may also be called a conscientious one) when he is anxious to propitiate St. Matteus, the Saint who is specially honoured at Soure—a little vine-hung village which gives its name to a station between Coimbra and Pombal—and to whom only offerings that have been stolen are acceptable.

All religious observances peculiar to the Portuguese *camponezos* are not as devoid of poetry as the one just recorded. To-day is Ascension Day, and soon the women will be afield gathering the posies that ensure prosperity to their households throughout the ensuing twelve months. This must be done between noon and one o'clock, the hour that saw the Ascension of *Nostro Senhor*. Ears of corn must be plucked to bring a blessing on the bread, and of these the bakers' wives take plentiful supply. Olive twigs, symbolising domestic peace, are added, together with rosemary, emblematic of bodily well-being; flowers, too, representing, in the sight of the Lord, the good deeds, whose perfume ariseth to the steps of His throne, and lastly, laurel, the reward with which they shall be crowned. The bouquets, carefully dried and shrouded in tissue paper, will be treasured up till next Ascension Day.

It is significant that no vicarious blessing is regarded as essential to the efficacy of this sheaf of Nature's gifts to men, gathered in the broad light of the noontide sun by hands that garner it in the sanctuary of home, without aid of candle, bell, or book. Those who are wont to bracket this country, in point of bigotry, with Spain, may be interested to know that priestly intervention plays but a small part in the life of the Portuguese people, while in no country are the educated classes, clerical equally with lay, more liberal and tolerant than in this.

No one could be more accommodating than the keeper of our consciences, and his tact never permits him to ask indiscreet questions. Perhaps the good Padre reflects that the stone floors

of his church are cold, that its narrow benches are hard, that Donna Emilia is eighty years of age, and that her purse is more pious than her practice. She subscribes liberally to all parish purposes, and, inheriting English notions from an English mother, connects the idea of beef and mutton (or to be precise roast pork) with the due performance of good work. She never, therefore, omits to furnish her men and her maids with a *bula* to eat meat during Lent, although such *bula* costs her as much as 2*d.* a head, while her own personal indulgence is only secured at double that amount ! And a fat silver piece always awaits his reverence, when, making the round of his parish at Whitsuntide, according to old Portuguese custom, he presents himself at the *Condados*. The little scene is rather picturesque. The Senhor Vicario, in full canonicals, is attended by scarlet-robed sacristan and acolyte, the one armed with holy water and asperge, the other swinging his smoking censer. All the household except Donna Emilia, who proclaims herself too old and too stiff for genuflection, is on its knees in the hall. There is Encarnação, comfortably oblivious of pence filched from the marketing money ; Etelvina, plump and demure, conscious of the rectitude with which she has denounced my widowed aunt's pink silk garters ; Dyonisia, the grenadier *criada grave*, a perfect monument of piety ; Manoec, the handy man, twirling his black Massaniello cap between his fingers ; and Marteliano, the tweeny-boy, who differs from an English ' buttons ' inasmuch as he never seems to have any buttons at all. I, who think I have sufficiently contributed to the occasion by decking the house with roses and myrtle, oleander and great white iris, have betaken myself to upper regions, whence I can see what follows. And what does follow ? An exchange of compliments between the Padre and Donna Emilia, so prolonged and flowery that I think they will never come to an end, the apologetic presentation of a weighty envelope and its absent-minded reception by the recipient with an air of being so absorbed in the pleasure of meeting Donna Emilia that he is hardly conscious of his action, and then—priest, sacristan, and acolyte trot off to the neighbours across the way, having entirely forgotten to bestow the blessing which was the *raison d'être* of the pastoral visitation.

Apropos of things ecclesiastical, it is worth remembering that the Portuguese Church has always ruled her household in her own way as seemed her best, never tolerating much interference from Rome and tenaciously clinging to and exercising her ancient

privileges, among the more important of which is the right to appoint her own Bishops, independent of the Vatican. Donna Emilia recalls an incident that still is, as it was then, significant of the relations between Portugal and the Holy See. Some forty odd years ago pilgrims and tourists were flocking into the Eternal City to participate in the rejoicings attendant on the '*Festa*' of St. Peter. Among the travellers were Donna Emilia and her husband Senhor Joaõ. Although not definitely promulgated till 1870, the newly proposed dogma of Papal Infallibility was already under consideration, and all the Bishops of Christendom had been summoned to Rome to give their adhesion to the doctrine. When, however, the signatures to the document that was to proclaim Pio Nono and all his successors to be infallible, were being collected, the Bishop of Vizeu (in the north of Portugal) refused to add his. Great, therefore, was his astonishment to find it appear among those of his brother prelates. Indignant at what was an impudent forgery, he at once issued a protest, making it both publicly and in private to the Portuguese Ambassador, who, in return, warned him privately and as a friend to leave the Papal States without a moment's delay, which he did. A day or two after this Senhor Joaõ and Donna Emilia, escorted by Dom Pedro, the then secretary to the Portuguese Embassy (he became Count of Villar Franco in later years), attended a private audience vouchsafed by the Pope. In the course of a circuit of the room which was lined by kneeling groups of the faithful, Pio Nono arrived before the little Portuguese party. As the names of its members were whispered to him by the officer in attendance, his benign expression changed to one of wrath and, with eyes flashing with fury, he burst into an expression of deep resentment at the action of the Bishop of Vizeu and the countenance afforded him by the Portuguese Government, as inferred from the presentation by the Ambassador of the Episcopal protest. Having vented his anger in language more forcible than appropriate to time and place, he turned on his heel, leaving the little group of Portuguese, who were speechless with dismay, without the customary benediction. So you see, this last Whitsuntide was not the first occasion on which Donna Emilia had been defrauded of a blessing!

I have referred to her journey to Rome in 1867. I often think with wonder and admiration of the energy implied by it. We, who run down to the Peninsula in the Sud-Express, sleeping in Pullmans, dining in restaurant cars, can form absolutely no idea of

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the hardships involved even in the family flitting from Figueira to Lisbon in the days when Donna Emilia was a girl. The move was literally an expedition! The men, who rode, had the best of it. The women were carried two in a *liteira* slung between mules, which tripped and stumbled along the so-called bridle tracks, to the sound of shouting and cursing, and the cracking of whips through the livelong night. For it was by night that the travelling was done to escape the scorching heat of the day. This was spent under conditions the most varied. If possible the halt was made at some private house, for which purpose letters of introduction were eagerly sought, but sometimes hospitality was only attainable at a Monastery, where the good fathers would be hard put to it to supply the wants of an incursion of females! No twentieth-century pen can venture to record the experiences undergone. Where neither private nor conventual shelter was forthcoming there was nothing for it but to take refuge in hovels indescribable, to which the lowest tavern (and some there are that are low indeed) now to be found in the country would be, by comparison, a palace. Three days of filth and discomfort, if not of actual privations, three nights of jolting and bumping and occasional capsizing, had to be endured before the 137 miles between Figueira and the capital were covered. Small wonder that those surviving to tell the tale look down with disdain on latter-day tourists who boast of 'roughing it' in Norway or Tirol. Comparatively luxurious was the journey to Coimbra, for it was made up the river by boat, a kind of barge with a layer of straw to supply the lack of seats and little tilted covers over bow and stern, under which the passengers would creep when the sun blazed down too fiercely. Nowadays, while the 'expresses' actually accomplish something like twenty-five miles an hour, even the ordinary trains will take you to Coimbra in an hour and a quarter. In my aunt's girlhood the whole day had to be spent in poling up the river. Sometimes the low vessel would run ashore, and then, what shoving and hauling to get her along through sand and mud! Provisions of food and drink had to be taken on these occasions—not too little, or else the ebb of the returning tide, leaving you stranded in an unsuspected shallow, might compel an involuntary fast, but also not too much, or else you had to do battle with the Guarda Fiscal (octroi officers) who would come down tooth and nail on the arriving barges. These duties were perforce executed amid the laughter of the students of Coimbra, who, traditionally hatless and in their

picturesque cloaks (which, though without the beggar's wallet of the original scholar, have survived even unto our day), made it their business to criticise all the strange faces that came and went in the city of Portuguese light and learning. Occasionally it was to Oporto—or, to speak more correctly, Porto—that the family migration took place. There was not, at this time, a single hackney carriage in the capital of Northern Portugal, and when my aunt and her contemporaries went out to dances, they were conveyed in sedan chairs. No more comfortable mode of transport was ever devised, Donna Emilia avers, and they would appear to be not entirely *démodé* even yet. Antiquated 'sedans' are still to be found in Lisbon, prolonging a decrepit existence under the patronage of the aged and infirm. Little conducive to neighbourliness could those far-away days have been—when my grandfather's smart English landau had to be 'horsed' by bullocks, so bad were the roads that no animal less sturdy could be expected to face them; and when the clearing of a track to make it just possible for wheels was often a necessary preliminary to paying a friendly call. There was, however, less reason to bemoan the lack of macadam in a land where all the world was at home in the saddle. To fair or to market, to church or to the beach to bathe from one of the tents that gave—and still give—such an air of military occupation to the strip of yellow sands, all sorts and conditions of men—and women—jog-trotted on pony, mule, or donkey-back. Time was, and not so long ago either, when the guests bidden to a wedding (among the conservative the ceremony still takes place at midnight, though fashion now decrees a daylight hour) assembled on their steeds to meet the bride and bridegroom, who, with their *padrinhos* and *madrinhas*—the spiritual godfathers and godmothers required by the old Portuguese ritual—arrived at the church door in similar fashion. And it is, as Donna Emilia laments with many an *ai, ai*, a sign of the degeneracy of the present day that the *Senhor Medico* no longer comes on his trusty ass to feel our pulses and inspect our tongues, but, so grand has the world become, must needs drive up in his trap, or even, maybe, expect a carriage to be sent for him!

Ai di me! The old order changeth and giveth place to the new, but it lingers long in this distant corner of Europe, and Portugal still presents many a quaint picture of the past, often redolent of an old-world charm and always full of interest and instruction.

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*THE OSBORNES.*¹

BY E. F. BENSON.

CHAPTER I.

FOR the last five hours all the windows along the front of the newest and whitest and most pretentious and preposterous house in Park Lane had been blazing with lights, which were kindled while the last flames of the long July day had scarcely died down into the ash-coloured night, and were still shining when morning began to tinge the velvet grey of the sky with colour and extinguish the stars. The lights, however, in No. 92 seemed to be of more durable quality than the heavenly constellations, and long after morning had come and the early traffic begun to boom on the roadway, they still burned with undiminished splendour. It was literally true also that all the windows in the long Gothic façade, which seemed to have strayed from Nuremberg into the West End of London, had been ablaze; not only was the ground floor lit, and the first floor, where was the ball-room, out of which all night had floated endless webs of perpetual melody, but the bedrooms above, though sleep then would have been impossible (and, as a matter of fact, they were yet untenanted), had been equally luminous, while from behind the flamboyant balustrade along the top of the house smaller windows, which might be conjectured to belong to servants' rooms, had joined in the general illumination. This was strictly in accordance with Mrs. Osborne's orders, as given to that staid and remarkable person called by her (when she forgot) Willum and (when she remembered) Thoresby, and (also when she remembered) alluded to as 'my major domo.' 'Willum' he had been in earlier and far less happy years, first as boot-boy, then, when the family blossomed into footmen, as third, second, and finally first of his order. Afterwards came things more glorious yet, and Thoresby was major-domo. At the present time Mrs. Osborne had probably forgotten that there existed such officers as boot-boys, and Willum probably had forgotten too. The rise of the family had been

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remarkably rapid, but he had kept pace with it, and to-night he felt, as did Mrs. Osborne, that the eminence attained by them all was of a very exalted order.

Mrs. Osborne had ordered that every window in the front of the house was to be lit, and this sumptuous edict was not without purpose. She said it looked more joyful, and what was a little electric light? So, as the evening had been devoted to joy, it was right that the house should reflect this quality. For herself, she felt very joyful indeed; the last month or two had, it is true, been arduous, and in all London it is probable that there had been nobody, man or woman, more incessantly occupied. But had there been an Eight Hours Bill introduced and passed, which should limit the hours of energy for hostesses, she would have scorned to take advantage of so pusillanimous a measure. Besides, the nature of her work necessitated continuous effort, for her work was to effect the siege and secure the capitulation of London. That, with her great natural shrewdness, she realised had to be done quickly, or it would never be done at all. London had not to be starved but to be stuffed into surrender. She had to feed it, and dance it, and ply it with concerts and plays and entertainments till its power of resistance was sapped. Long quiet sieges, conducted with regularity, however untiring, were, she knew well, perfectly incapable of accomplishing its fall. The enemy—at times, though she loved it so well, she almost considered London to be her enemy—must be given no quarter and no time to consider its plans. The assault had to be violent as well as untiring; the dear foe must be battered into submission. To ‘arrive’ at all you had to gallop. And she had galloped with such success that on this night in July, or rather on this cool dewy morning in July, she felt that the capitulation was signed and handed her. But she felt no chill of reaction, as is so often the case even in the very moment of victory, when energies not only can be relaxed, but must be relaxed, since there is nothing for them to brace themselves over any more. Her victory was of different sort: she knew quite well that she would have to go on being extremely energetic, else the capitulated garrison would by degrees rally again. But since the exercise of these energies was delightful to her, she was merely charmed that there would be a continual call for them.

There was no ‘casement-jessamine’ on the house which could stir ‘to the dancers dancing in tune,’ but in front of the lowest story, growing apparently from large earthenware pots filled with

mould, were enormous plants of tin ivy which swarmed up the walls of the house. But it was too strongly and solidly made to stir even to the vibration produced by the earth-quaking motor 'buses which bounced down Park Lane, and thus the dancers dancing in tune had no effect whatever on it. This stalwart ivy was indeed a sort of symbol of the solidity of the fortunes of the house, for it was made at the manufactories from which her husband derived his really American wealth. They covered acres of ground at Sheffield, and from their doors vomited forth all sorts of metallic hardware of the most reliable quality. The imitation ivy, of course, was but a froth, a chance flotsam on the stream of hardware, and was due to the inventive genius of Mrs. Osborne's eldest son Percy, who had a great deal of taste. His was no abstruse taste, like an appreciation of caviare or Strauss, that required an educated or, as others might say, a vitiated palate or a jaded ear, but it appealed strongly and almost overwhelmingly, to judge by the order book of the Art Department, to the eye of that general public which goes in for forms of decoration which are known as both 'chaste' and 'handsome,' and are catholic enough to include mirrors framed in plush on which are painted bunches of flowers and bead curtains that hang over doors. With shrewd commercial instinct Percy never attempted to educate the taste of his customers into what they ought to want, but gave them, in 'handsome' catalogues, lists of the things they did want, and of a quality that they would be sure to find satisfactory. Though this ivy, for instance, was from the excellence of its workmanship and the elaborate nature of its colouring rather expensive, it was practically indestructible till the melting point of the best tin was reached, and it resembled ivy so closely that you might perfectly well prick your fingers on it before you found out the art that so closely imitated nature. Indeed, before now some very pretty jesting had taken place in the windows of the house with regard to it, when Percy, who liked his joke, asked (amid the scarcely suppressed merriment of the family) a stranger to pick a leaf of it and examine the beauties of nature as illustrated in the manner in which the stalk of the leaf was joined to the parent stem. Also it had no inconvenient habits of growing over places on which you did not wish it to trespass (if you wanted more, you ordered more), it harboured neither slugs nor any abominable insects, and afforded no resting-place for birds, while it could be washed free from London dust by the simple application of the hand-syringe.

The ivy has been insisted on at some little length because it was typical of the fortunes and family of its inventor. It was solid, indestructible and new, and in just the same way the Osbornes were very strong and well, held large quantities of gilt-edged stock, and had no family history whatever. In one point only were they unlike the ivy that clung to the limestone wall of the house in Park Lane, but that was an important one. The point of the ivy was to deceive—it was often successful in so doing—while the Osbornes never intended to deceive anybody. There was, with regard at any rate to Mrs. Osborne, her husband, and Percy no possibility of being taken in. You could see at once what they were like: a glance would save you any subsequent disappointment or surprises. And no one, it may be added at once, ever pricked his fingers over them. They were as kind as they were new. But since many strains of blood have gone to the making of each member of the human race, one strain prospering and predominating in this specimen, while in another, though of the same blood, it scarcely shows a trace of existence, the divergence of type, even in one generation, is often very marked indeed. Thus, though Mr. Osborne felt that he both understood and admired his eldest son, his admiration for the younger was agreeably tempered with mystification. ‘Old Claude’s a rum fellow,’ he often said, and Mrs. Osborne agreed with him. But, as will be seen, there was still much in common between Claude and them.

The house, like the ivy, was also new and solid, and in point of fact none of its inhabitants, again with the curious exception of Claude, were quite used to it yet. This they concealed as far as they were able, but the concealment really went little farther than the fact that they did not openly allude to it. They all agreed that the house was very handsome, and Mr. Osborne had a secret gratification (not unmingled with occasional thrills of misgiving as to whether he had wasted his money) in the knowledge of the frightful costliness of it. Outside, as has been said, it was of Gothic design; but if a guest thought that he was to pass his evening or listen to music in a Gothic interior he would have been rudely undeceived. It had been unkindly said that you went through a Gothic door to find Vandals within, and if Vandalism includes the appropriation of beautiful things the Vandalism exhibited here was very complete. But the destructive side of Vandalism had no counterpart; Mr. Osborne was very careful of his beautiful things and very proud of them. He admired them in proportion to their expensiveness,

and having an excellent head for figures could remember how much all the more important pictures, articles of furniture, and tapestries had 'stood him in.' And he ran no risk of forgetting these items, for he kept them green in his memory by often speaking of them to his guests.

'Yes,' he would say, 'there's three thousand pounds' worth of seating accommodation in this very drawing-room, and they tell me 'twas lucky to have got the suite at that figure. It's all Louis—Louis—Per, my boy, did they tell us it was Louis XV. or XVI. ? Sixteenth, yes, Louis XVI. Divide it up and you'll find that it averages two hundred pounds a chair. Seems funny to sit on two hundred pounds, hey ? Mrs. Osborne, she said a smart thing about that. "Sit firm, then," she said, "and you'll keep it safe."'

The furnishing and appointments of the house had in fact been entrusted to a notable firm, which, though it had certainly charged Mr. Osborne a great deal of money for what it supplied, had given him very good value for his cheque, and both he and his wife, after they had got over the unusual feeling of sitting on two hundred pounds, and, if you chose, putting your feet up on another two hundred, were quite content that both the furniture of this Louis XVI. room, for instance, and the cheque for it, should be what they called a 'little stiff.' It was the same in the Italian room that opened out of it, and matters were no better in the dining-room which was furnished with Chippendale. Here, indeed, a very dreadful accident had happened on the first evening that they had got into the house, now two months ago, for Mr. Osborne, alone with Percy and his wife for that night, had drawn his chair up to the fire—the night being chilly—to drink his second and third glasses of port, and had rested his feet on the pierced steel fender that guarded the hearth. This led to his tilting his Chippendale chair back on to its hind legs, which, designed to bear only half the weight of its occupant, had crashed into splinters and deposited Mr. Osborne on the floor and his second glass of port on his shirt-front. But he had taken the incident with great good humour. 'Live and learn,' he had said, 'live and learn. Got to sit up and behave now, Maria. Per, my boy, don't you finish all the port while your dad changes his shirt. Drink fair, for fair play's a jewel, and fill your mother's glass.'

Mr. Osborne would never have attained to the eminence he occupied as a manufacturer of hardware had he not been a man of intelligence, and instead of upbraiding the furnishing firm for

charging so high a price for a 'four legs of carved dry rot,' which a momentary irritation, carefully kept to himself, might have led him to do, drew the lesson that it was unwise to tilt chairs unless they were clearly tiltable. But this accident had caused him to insist on his own room, which he called his snugger, being furnished as he chose and not as anybody else chose, and here he rejoiced in a sofa of the pattern known as Chesterfield, a solid mahogany table, on which stood a telephone, and a broad, firm mantel-shelf where he could put a box of cigars without fear of its over-balancing. On this point, also, his wife had adopted a similar attitude, and her own sitting-room, opening out of the white-furnished bedroom where she was afraid to touch anything for fear of 'soiling' it, was thoroughly to her taste. As in her husband's snugger, she had matters arranged for her own comfort and not for other people's admiration. Percy had 'done' the room for her, and sometimes when she came up here to look at her letters before going to bed, and drink the glass of hot water which was so excellent a digestive after the dinner that was still a little curious to her, she wondered whether Percy did not understand house furnishing better than the great French firm the name of which she was always rather shy of pronouncing. She had asked him to choose all the furniture himself, remarking only that she was a little rheumatic, and found it difficult to get out of very low chairs. And he had succeeded to admiration; not only had he consulted her comfort, but he had divined and satisfied her taste. The paper on the walls was a pattern of ferns with iridescent lilies of the valley neatly disposed among them, so that it was almost a shame to hang pictures thereon; indeed, it would have been quite a shame had not those pictures been so well selected. For Mrs. Osborne cared far more about the subject of a picture than the manner in which it was presented, and all the subjects were admirably chosen. There was a beautiful 'view' of the church that Edward had built at Sheffield, a print of the Duke of Wellington in a garter and of Queen Victoria in a bonnet, and a couple of large oil paintings, one of the Land's End and the other of Kynance Cove, both of which were intimately associated in her affectionate heart with her honeymoon. Edward and she had spent a month in Cornwall, staying at little inns and walking as much as possible to save expense, and though all that was thirty years ago, she never entered this room now without remembering how they had sat just on that very bluff above the emerald sea, and read the 'Idylls of the King' together, and he had promised her,

when they were rich enough, to give her an emerald necklace to remind her of the colour of the sea. It is true that those emeralds (which were remarkably fine) were not exactly of the tint that either nature had given to the sea or the very vivid artist had reproduced in the painting that hung on the walls, but they still reminded both her and Edward of those enchanted weeks in Cornwall, and it was but seldom, when she wore her emeralds, that he did not say, 'Mrs. O. has got the Land's End emeralds on to-night.'

Then, more often than not, would follow the explanation of this somewhat cryptic remark, and the whispered information of how much the emeralds had cost. Mrs. Osborne, as a matter of fact, had overheard again and again what the figure was, but she was still officially ignorant of it, and generally closed the subject by saying, 'Mr. Osborne won't never tell me what he paid for them. I believe he got them cheap, and that's why.'

But she secretly rejoiced to know that this was not the reason. The reason was just the opposite: they had been so enormously expensive. That expense would not be unreasonable now, but at the time—for she had worn the Land's End necklace for twenty years—it had been preposterous. They had had no holiday one year, in consequence, but had grilled in Sheffield throughout August and September. But during those months she had worn the emeralds every evening, and it had been a sort of renewal of the honeymoon. Though they had not been able to go away themselves they had managed to send Percy and Claude to the seaside, and the two months in Sheffield, when every night she wore the emeralds which had been the cause of their remaining there, was still one of Mrs. Osborne's most delightful memories. Since then times had considerably changed, and though to many the change from simplicity of life and not uncomfortable narrowness of means to the wider horizons which the rapid accumulation of an enormous fortune brings within the view, implies a loss of happiness rather than an extension of it, neither Edward nor she was of that Arcadian build. They both immensely enjoyed the wider horizon; the humble establishment with parlour-maids had been all very well, but how much more enjoyable was the brown-stone house on the outskirts of Sheffield with footmen and a carriage! For Mrs. Osborne did not find it in the least interfered with her happiness to have more to manage or 'richer' things to eat. As a matter of fact she liked managing, and rejoiced in the building of a new wing to the brown-stone house, in the acquisition of motor cars, and in

drain on their time and resources by Edward being made Mayor of Sheffield. Neither of them ever thought that they had been happier when their means were more straitened and their establishment humbler, but both of them, in spite of an essential and innate simplicity of nature, rejoiced in these embellishments, and were always ready to enlarge and embellish and rejoice. They had always made the most of their current resources—though in a merely financial sense they had always saved—and it was as great a pleasure to Mrs. Osborne to see her table plentifully loaded with the most expensive food that money could provide, and press second helpings on her guests, as it had been to have the solid four courses at one o'clock dinner on Sunday in Sheffield and tell her friends that Mr. Osborne liked nothing better than to have a good dinner on Sunday and see a pleasant party to share it with him. She still inquired if she might not tempt her neighbours at table to have another quail, just as she had tried to persuade them to have a second cut of roast lamb when in season, while from the other end of the table she would hear, as a hospitable echo, her husband's voice recommending *Veuve Clicquot of 1884*, just as in the old days he had recommended the sound whiskey which would hurt nobody not if you drank it all afternoon.

The year of the mayoralty of Sheffield had been succeeded by seven years fatter than ever Joseph had dreamed of. Edward was as sound in his business as he was in the whiskey he so hospitably pressed on his guests, and by dint of always supplying goods of the best possible workmanship and material at prices that gave him no more than a respectable profit, the profits had annually increased till, in the opinion of those who did not adopt so unspeculative a quality of goods, they had almost ceased to be respectable, and became colossal instead. Then, at the end of seven fat years, Edward had realised that he was sixty, though he neither looked nor felt more than an adolescent fifty, had turned the hardware business into a company, and as vendor had received ordinary shares to an extent that would ensure him an income no less than that of the fat years. He had already put by a capital that produced some ten thousand pounds a year, and he was thus not disadvantageously situated. Percy, however, still held the Arts Department in his own hands. The plant and profits of that had not been offered to the public, but had been presented to Percy by his father on the occasion of his marriage, an event now six years old. For the whole idea of ornamental tin ivy and the host of

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collateral ideas that emanated therefrom had been Percy's, and it was now a joke between his father and him that Mrs. P. would soon have an emerald necklace that would take the shine out of the Land's End. 'Land's End will be Mrs. P.'s beginning,' said his father. 'And the sea is Britannia's realm,' he added by a happy afterthought. 'I'll call her Mrs. C. instead of Mrs. P. Hey, Per ?'

Badinage had ensued. She was called Mrs. C. instantly, and there were numerous conjectures as to who C. was. Mr. Osborne said that it was curious that C. was the first letter of co-respondent ; but that joke, though Edward was usually very successful in such facetiæ, was not very well received. The momentary Mrs. C. ate her grapes with a studied air, and Mrs. Osborne, from the other end of the table—this was still in Sheffield—said, 'You don't think, Eddie ; you let your tongue run away with you.'

On reflection Eddie agreed with her, and there was no more heard about Mrs. C. But he always thought that his badinage had been taken a little too seriously. 'A joke's a joke,' he said to himself as he shaved his chin next morning, leaving side whiskers. 'But if they don't like one joke, we'll try another. Lots of jokes still left.'

So without sense of injury or of being misunderstood he tried plenty of others, which were as successful as humour should have any expectation of being. Humour comes from a well that is rarely found, but when found proves always to be inexhaustible. The numerical value therefore of Edward's jokes had not been diminished, and Percy inherited his father's sense of fun.

Still in Sheffield, Mr. Osborne had, after the formation of the company, seen an extraordinary increase in business, with the result that his income, already scarcely respectable, mounted and mounted. Years ago he had built a chapel of corrugated iron outside and pitch-pine inside in the middle of that district of the town which had become his, and was enstreeted with the houses of his workmen, and now he turned the corrugated building into a reading-room, as soon as ever the tall Gothic church with which he had superseded it was ready for use. A Princess had come to the opening of it, and had declared the discarded church to be a reading-room, and there was really nothing more to do in Sheffield, except to say that he did not wish to become a knight. Mr. Osborne had no opinion of knights : knighthood in his mind was the bottom shelf of a structure where, if he took a place, it might easily become a permanent

one. But he had no idea of accepting a bottom place on the shelves. With his natural shrewdness he said that he had done nothing to deserve it. But he winked in a manner that anticipated familiarity towards shelves that were higher. He had not done with the question of shelves yet, though he had nothing to say to the lowest one.

It must not be supposed that because he had retired from active connection with the hardware business his mind slackened. The exact contrary was the case. There was no longer any need for him to exercise that shrewd member on hardware, and it only followed that the thought he had previously given to hardware was directed into other channels. He thought things over very carefully, as was his habit, before taking any step, summed up his work in Sheffield, settled that a knighthood was not adequate to reward him for what he had already done, but concluded that he had nothing more to do in Sheffield just for the moment. And having come to that conclusion he had a long talk with Mrs. O. in her boudoir, where she always went after breakfast to see cook and write her letters. But that morning cook waited downstairs in her clean apron long after Mrs. Osborne had gone to her boudoir, expecting every moment to hear her bell, and no bell sounded. For more weighty matters were being debated than the question of dinner, and at first when Mr. Osborne broached the subject his wife felt struck of a heap.

'Well, Mrs. O., it's for you to settle,' he said, 'and if you're satisfied to remain in Sheffield, why in Sheffield we remain, old lady, and that's the last word you shall hear from me on the subject. But there's a deal to be considered, and I'll just put the points before you again. There's yourself, to lead off with. You like seeing your friends at dinner and giving them of the best, and so do I. Well, for all I can learn, there's a deal more of that going on in London, where you can have your twenty people to dinner every night if you have a mind, and a hundred to dance to your fiddles afterwards. And I'm much mistaken, should we agree to leave Sheffield and set up in town, if Mrs. O.'s parties don't make some handsome paragraphs in the "Morning Post" before long.'

'Lor, to think of that!' said Mrs. Osborne reflectively. She did not generally employ that interjection, which she thought rather common, and even now, though she was so absorbed, she corrected herself, and said, 'There, to think of that!'

'But mind you, my dear,' continued Mr. Osborne, 'if we go

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to town, and have a big house in the country, as per the scheme I've been putting before you, we don't do it to take our ease and just sit in a barouche and drive round the Park to fill up the time to luncheon. I shall have my work to do, and it's you who must be helping me to get on, as you've always done, God bless you, Maria, and fine and busy it will make you! There's a County Council in London as well as in Sheffield, and there's a House of Parliament in London, which there isn't here. No, my dear, if we go to London it won't be for a life of ease, for I expect work suits us both better, and there's plenty of work left in us both yet. Give me ten years' more work, and then if you like we'll get into our Bath chairs, and comb out the fleece of the poodle, and think what a busy couple we are.'

Mr. Osborne got up and shuffled to the window in his carpet slippers. They had been worked and presented to him by his wife on his last birthday, and this had been a great surprise, as she had told him throughout that they were destined for Percy. At this moment they suggested something to him.

'Look at me already, my dear!' he said. 'What should I have thought ten years ago if I had seen myself here in your boudoir at eleven of the morning in carpet slippers, instead of being at work in my shirt sleeves this last three hours? "Eddie," I should have said to myself, "you're getting a fat, lazy old man, with years of work in you yet." And, by Gad, Mrs. O., I should have been right. Give me a good dinner, but let me get an appetite for it, though, thank God, my appetite's good enough yet. But let me feel I earn it.'

Mrs. Osborne got up from her davenport and came and stood by her husband in the window. In front of her stretched the broad, immaculate gravel walk, bordered by a long riband bed of lobelia, calceolarias, and geraniums. Beyond that was the weedless tennis lawn, with its brand new net, where one of the very numerous gardeners was even now marking out the court with the machine that Mr. Osborne had invented and patented the year before he retired from entire control of his business, and which sold in ever-increasing quantities. Below, the ground fell rapidly away, and not half a mile off the long straggling rows of workmen's houses, between which ran cobbled roads and frequent electric trams, stretched unbroken into the town. Of late years it had grown very rapidly in the direction of this brown-stone house, and with its growth the fogs and smoky vapours had increased so that it was

seldom, as on this morning, that they could see from the windows the tall and very solid tower of the Gothic church which had supplanted that of corrugated iron. He looked out over this with his wife's hand in his for a moment in silence.

'I don't know how it is with you, my dear,' he said, 'but every now and then a feeling comes over me which I can't account for or resist. And the feeling that's been coming over me this last month ago is that me and Sheffield's done all the work we're going to do together. But there are plenty of days of work for us both yet, but not together. Look at that there quarter, my dear, right from where the New Lane houses begin to where's the big chimney of the works behind the church. I made that, as well you know, and it's paid me well to do it, and it's paid Sheffield to have me to do it. Not an ounce of bad material, to my knowledge, has gone into the factory gates, and not an ounce of bad workmanship has come out of them. I've paid high for first-class materials, and I've seen that I got them, and I've turned out none but honest goods what'll do the work I guarantee them for and last you ten times as long as inferior stuff, as you and cook know, since there's not a pot or a pan in your kitchen, my dear, but what came from the shops. And I've made my fortune over it, and that's over, so I take it, and what's the sense of my sitting on top of a hill just to look at my calceolarias and get an appetite for dinner by running about that court there? But if you've got a fancy for staying in Sheffield, as I say, this is the last word I speak on the subject.'

Mrs. Osborne nodded at him and pressed his arm as he poured out these gratifying recollections in his rather hoarse voice.

'There's more on your mind yet, Eddie, my dear,' she said. 'Do you think I've lived with you these years and seen you off your victuals by day and heard you tossing and turning in your bed at night without getting to know when you've told me all or when you've got something further unbeknown to me yet? It's not me only you're thinking of.'

Mr. Osborne beamed on his wife.

'Well, if you aren't right every time,' he said. 'You've guessed it all, I reckon. Yes, it's Claude. I doubt whether I didn't make a mistake about Claude at the beginning, and whether we shouldn't have done better to put him into the business like Percy, and let Alfred leave him his money or not, just as he liked. But there, if we made a mistake it's our business to make the best we can of it now. But whenever I see the boy I think we did the right thing by

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him, and we've got to go on doing the right thing. And if a young fellow has been to Eton and Cambridge, and is going to be as rich a man and richer nor his father was, without having to do a stroke of work for it, I ask you, Mrs. O., what's he to do with himself in Sheffield? Of course, he could go to London and work at the law, or go into the army, or adopt any other of the ways of wasting time and doing nothing without having it cast up at you, but think of the chance he gets if you and I settle in London and have a country house as well, so that he can ask his friends down for a bit of shooting or whatever's on, and bring them home to dine, and stop for his mother's dance or concert, or whatever you have named for such a day.'

He paused a moment.

'He'll be home for good now in a month's time, and I should like to be able to say to him, "Claude, my boy, there's no need for you to think how you'll occupy yourself in Sheffield for your vacation, for we'll soon be moving on. Mother and I"—that's what I shall say, you understand—"have come to an agreement, and there'll be a house for you in Grosvenor Square perhaps, or in Park Lane, to bring your friends to, and a shooting box somewhere else, so that whether it's Lord This or the Honourable That you can bring them down and find a welcome, and a bird or two to shoot at, and the pick of the London girls for you to dance with."'

'Eh, Edward, you talk as if the thing was done,' said his wife.

'Well, so it is, if you and I make up our minds to it. And you guessed right: it's a particular feeling I've always had about Claude. Eton and Cambridge may have made a change in him, or it may be that he was something different all along. But to see him come into a room, into that smoking-room, for instance, at the Club. Why, it's as if the whole place belonged to him, it is, if only he cared to claim it. And the very waiters know the difference; and I warrant you there's always an evening paper ready for him, whoever has to go without. But in London he'll find friends, yes, and a girl to marry him, I wager you, whose folk came over with the Conqueror. Maria, I should like to speak of my son-in-law the Earl, or the Countess, my boy's mother-in-law. There's a deal in a name if you can get hold of the right one.'

Mrs. Osborne gave a great sigh, and looked at her rings, and as she sighed the row of pearls that hung over her ample bosom rose and fell. There was a great deal in what Edward had said, and that which concerned Claude appealed to her most. She had felt it all,

again and again, and again and again she had wished, content though she was with the very comfortable circumstances of her life, that they had some other house in which to welcome him home for his vacation. She felt he was her own son at heart, but his manners were such ! It was Claude all over to behave as if the whole room belonged to him, should he choose to claim it. She was devoted to Percy, but Percy, she well knew, felt as she did when he was going out to dinner, and thought about what he should say and looked to see if his hair was tidy, and hoped he hadn't left his handkerchief behind. But Claude seemed to know that everything was all right with him, or, if it wasn't, he didn't care. Once on a solemn occasion, when a Royal visitor was in Sheffield, the whole family had been bidden to lunch with the mayor, and Claude had discovered in the middle of lunch that he hadn't got a pocket-handkerchief, and the day was enough to make anybody perspire. And then in thought Mrs. Osborne checked again, and said to herself 'action of the skin.' But Claude, though hot, had been as cool as a cucumber. He just stopped a waiter who was going by, and said, 'Please send out to the nearest shop and get me a handkerchief.' Mrs. Osborne would never have dared to do that, and if she had, she felt that the handkerchief wouldn't have come. But in five minutes Claude had his, 'and never paid for it neither,' thought Mrs. Osborne to herself, in a mixed outburst of pride and misgiving. Claude wanted a handkerchief and it came. He didn't bother about it.

But the whole suggestion of giving up Sheffield when she was so friendly and pleasant with so many local magnates and their wives, and launching into the dim unplumbed sea of London was bewildering, though exciting. She had no doubts about Edward : wherever Edward was he would do his part ; she was only doubtful about her own. But these doubts were not of durable quality, while the reflections about Claude were adamant in texture. Once a friend of Claude's at Cambridge had come to stay at the brown-stone house, and it had all been very awkward. He was an Honourable, too, and his father was a lord, and though he was very quiet and polite, Mrs. Osborne had seen that something was wrong from the first. The most carefully planned dinners had been offered him, and Edward had brought out the Château Yquem, which was rarely touched, and this young man had eaten and drunk as if 'it was nothing particular.' Mrs. Osborne had tried to console herself with the thought that he didn't think much of his victuals, whatever they were, but it was not that he refused dishes. He just ate

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them, ate them all, and said no more about it. And he had been regaled with two dinner parties during the three days he was with them, to which all sorts of aldermen and their wives and daughters had been bidden. She had not forgotten his rank either, for though there were two knights and their wives present at one of these dinners, and at the other two knights and a baronet, he had taken her in on both occasions. Nor was their conversation wholly satisfactory, for though Mrs. Osborne had the 'Morning Post' brought up to her room with her early tea, while the young man was with them, in order that she might be up to date with the movements and doings of the nobility, she had extraordinarily bad luck, since the bankruptcy case that was going on was concerned with the affairs of his sister and her husband, and the memorial service at St. James's proved to be coincident with the obsequies of his great-uncle. Mrs. Osborne felt that these things would not happen when they were in the midst of everything in town.

So the momentous decision had been made, and two strenuous years had followed, during which time Mr. Osborne had settled to adopt (as became a man of property in these Socialistic days) the Conservative cause in politics, and after one defeat had got himself returned for one of the divisions of Surrey. During that time, too, No. 92 Park Lane had been pulled down, and by amalgamation with No. 93 been built up again in a style that enabled Mrs. O. to have her friends to dine, with a bit of a dance afterwards or Caruso to sing, without it being necessary for late comers to huddle together on the stairs where they could not hear a note, or stand in the doorway of the ball-room without being able to get in, or to dance if they did. And though, as has been stated, the years had been strenuous and the struggle continuous, neither Mrs. Osborne nor her husband ever felt that it was a losing game that they were playing. Apart from this one defeat in the Conservative interest, and one dismal attempt at a dance in the house that they had taken before No. 92 was ready, to which eight men came (all told and counting Percy), they had swiftly and steadily mounted. For, true to the principles on which her husband had amassed so large a fortune, all that Mrs. Osborne offered was of the very best, or at any rate of the sort which momentarily most attracted. The singer who was most in vogue sang at her concerts, or the heels that were most admired danced there, and beyond doubt the extreme pleasure that the excellent woman took in her own hospitality contributed largely to its success. She was no careworn, anxious-eyed hostess,

but bubbled with good humour, was genuinely glad to see the world fill her rooms, and always welcomed the suggestion that any guest should bring a friend, whose name was instantly entered by her admirable secretary in her visiting list.

And thus she rose and prospered till, on the date at which this story opens, she had crowned the work of her season by giving this immense fancy dress ball, which, to give it its due, had whipped up again to full activity the rather moribund energies of the season. Somehow the idea had taken on at once : there had been no fancy dress function of any importance that season, and by one of those whims that govern the flow and ebb of the social world, London had thrown itself with avidity into the notion. It was soon clear that everyone would be there, and everyone was, and at last in her own house Mrs. Osborne heard the strains of the National Anthem.

It had been of no particular period : the point was not to have a strict and classical function, but any amount of jewels and fine dresses, and Queens of Sheba, Cleopatras, and Marie Antoinettes joined hands in the quadrille with Napoleon, Piers Gaveston, and Henry VIII. She herself had been an admirable Mistress Page, her husband a veritably Merry Knight. But of all the brilliant figures in that motley crowd there was none perhaps more admired than the slim, dark Piers Gaveston. And that was Claude.

(To be continued.)

